

Netanyahu beats no-confidence motion, may face early elections

TEL AVIV (Agencies) — Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu got past the first of several political hurdles Monday aimed at challenging a new Mideast peace deal by winning a no-confidence motion in parliament.

But the threat of early elections loomed after legislators decided to present a bill to parliament calling for a spring vote.

Selling the new land-for-peace deal to hard-liners in his coalition government has not been easy. A brutal killing of a Jewish settler, apparently by Palestinians, in the West Bank city of Hebron Monday was likely to make the process even harder.

In a demonstration outside the premier's home later Monday, hundreds of right-wing Israelis carried torches and angry signs calling for Netanyahu's resignation.

Many chanted "Bibi go home," and "Bibi is a traitor," referring to the prime minister by his nickname. Some protesters scuffled with police and tried to break through a barrier. Police said 21 protesters were arrested.

Still, lawmakers from the dovish Labour Party and its left-wing partners made good on a promise to back the premier in parliament, at least until the new accord signed Friday with Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat, is implemented.

"We believe the prime minister should be removed from office and we believe in early elections ... but we will not trade our principles for political gain. For the sake of peace, we will not allow (Netanyahu) to fall," said Labour lawmaker Eli Goldschmidt, explaining to parliament why his party did not vote against the premier Monday.

The no-confidence motion brought by the tiny extreme right-wing Meleked Party failed to pass with eight votes for, 21 against and 15 abstentions. A majority of the 120 lawmakers, including Netanyahu, did not even show up for the vote, which had almost no chance of passing.

Labour's Knesset support is key to Netanyahu who faces growing opposition to the peace plan from within his own coalition government. But hardliners opposed to the West Bank withdrawal and opposition legislators hoping to bring down Netanyahu agreed Monday to join forces for early national elections.

In a first step towards toppling the Netanyahu government, the Knesset Law Committee voted to hold a first reading on a bill to disperse parliament and hold new elections within 100 days, suggesting the date for the elections was March 16, after the current peace accord is to be implemented.

Committee Chairman Hanan Porat said the first reading of the bill could be held within two weeks. A bill needs to be approved in three readings before it becomes law.

The early elections bill will need to be backed by 60 of the 120 legislators. Supporters of the bill said they were confident they could pass the legislation.

Netanyahu had rejected the early election call only a few hours ahead of the vote but moved to appease right-wing opponents of the land-for-peace deal by pledging to continue settlements in the occupied territories.

"There will be no early elections because the opponents of the agreement all know that no government could have obtained a better agreement," he told public radio.

The right cannot allow itself to topple the government which is the best placed to defend Greater Israel," he added.

The hardline nationalist premier said there was nothing preventing Israel from building in Arab east Jerusalem or the West Bank.

"These agreements do not place any restrictions on construction in Jerusalem or the settlements in Judea and Samaria," Netanyahu said, using the Israeli names for the West Bank (see story on page 12).

Netanyahu also Monday summoned ministers from his Likud Party and representatives of the other parties in his coalition to try to rally the largest possible majority behind the Wye River accord.



HRH Crown Prince Hassan on Monday confers with Yemeni Prime Minister Abdul Karim Iryani in the presence of Prime Minister Fayez Tarawneh (Petra photo)

Regent stresses need to boosting Jordanian-Yemeni cooperation

AMMAN (Petra) — His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan, the Regent, on Monday emphasised the need to strengthen cooperation between Yemen and Jordan and to coordinate the two countries' efforts to restore pan-Arab action and safeguard higher Arab interests.

During a meeting with Yemeni Prime Minister Abdul Karim Iryani and Prime Minister Fayez Tarawneh at Raghadan Palace, the Regent also expressed Jordan's keenness on promoting bilateral ties.

Prince Hassan expressed his appreciation of the positive spirit that marked the meetings of the Jordanian-Yemeni Higher Joint Committee which ended with the conclusion of several agreements between the two countries (see relevant story on page 3).

Iryani conveyed a message to His Majesty King Hussein and Prince Hassan from Yemeni President Ali Abdullah Saleh wishing the King a speedy recovery and safe return home to resume his active role in Arab and Islamic affairs.

Iryani stressed his country's desire to advance links with Jordan in economic, trade, cultural and educational fields, adding that the higher committee's agreements will enhance bilateral ties.

At the talks, which were continued at a luncheon which the Regent hosted in honour of the Yemeni delegation, the two sides reviewed the peace process and several regional and international issues of common concern.

Iryani expressed appreciation of Jordan's role in seeking to achieve a comprehensive peace, and praised the King's efforts at Wye Plantation in the U.S. that culminated in the signing of the Palestinian-Israeli accord.

Prince Hassan underlined the need for building a comprehensive peace in the region based on respect of the rights of all parties and guaranteeing the restoration of all Arab rights.

In reviewing inter-Arab relations, Prince Hassan called for reviving joint Arab action and building strong inter-Arab relations on clear principles, with each country respecting the other's own approach and stand within a framework that does not negatively affect relations among the Arab countries.

Later the Yemeni delegation left for home and were seen off at the airport by Tarawneh and government officials.

Palestinian, Israeli killed in West Bank

HEBRON (R) — An Israeli guard at a power plant was shot dead in the West Bank on Monday and the body of a Palestinian man was found hours later in what appeared to be a tit-for-tat killing.

The incidents were likely to raise tensions and increase anger among Jewish settlers and Palestinian militants over the land-for-peace deal Israel and the Palestinians signed at the White House on Friday.

The Israeli army said the guard, identified as Danny Vargas, a 29-year-old father of two, had been shot at close range in his car by suspected Palestinian guerrillas and dumped on a quiet road in the divided West Bank city of Hebron.

It said his assailants had stolen the car and fled to the Palestinian-controlled part of Hebron. Palestinian police later recovered the blood-stained vehicle and were examining it with their Israeli counterparts.

"The murder is the seventh attack that occurred in the Hebron area in which the attackers carry out an attack and then flee to the Palestinian (National) Authority areas," Yitzhak Eitan, the Israeli army commander in the area, told Israel Radio.

There was no immediate claim of responsibility.

Hours later, the body of a Palestinian man was found near the Jewish settlement of Itamar outside the West Bank town of Nablus. Israeli police said they had received an anonymous telephone alerting them to the corpse.

Israeli television said the man may have worked at the settlement picking olives.

Jewish settler leader Aharon Domb condemned the incident.

"To our regret a body (of a Palestinian) was found in the area of the Itamar settlement. If our fears prove true, this murder must be condemned. This is not the way of the Jews," he said in a statement.

Settler leaders have said the interim accord for the handover by Israel of another 13 per cent of the West Bank in return for concrete Palestinian security steps will put their lives in jeopardy.

'Southern Bell quits race to hold 40% equity in JTC'

By Ghadeer Taher

AMMAN — Southern Bell Corporation, one of two companies vying for a 40 per cent equity stake in the Jordan Telecommunications Corporation (JTC), has pulled out of the race, informed sources said Monday.

According to the sources, the American communications company, Southern Bell, notified Merrill Lynch, the American firm acting as financial advisor to the controversial sale, that it was no longer interested in submitting a final offer.

The minister of post and telecommunications as well as other officials refused to comment on the pullout and what course of action the government would now take as a result.

Southern Bell's decision now leaves British Cable and Wireless as the sole contender for the stake unless the government decides to reissue the tender. But such a move, industry sources say, will further put into question the country's privatisation programme, already marred by protracted political infighting about the merits and mechanism of selling state assets, especially to a strategic partner.

"The government will now be comparing apples to nothing in the eyes of most Jordanians... it will be harder to sell the idea to them even if we get a good deal," said one politician. "At the same time the government has to proceed with the sale if it gets the right price from Cable and Wireless to salvage our international reputation," he said, adding that if the deal fails to go through, potential foreign investors may shy away from the Kingdom.

The government last month asked the two companies, which had already submitted their indicative prices, to make their final offers by year end.

Speculating on the reasons behind Southern Bell's decision, industry sources cited the government's new terms to its original information memorandum coupled with a sluggish international market.

One of the memorandum changes calls for a review of the executive board, which has a four to three representation in favour of the strategic partner, when the telecommunication firm's exclusivity period runs out in the year 2002.

(Continued on page 12)

Case of Faisali-Qadissieh match to be decided by discipline committee

By Tareq Ayyoub

AMMAN — The Jordan Football Association on Monday failed to take a decision to end the crisis that resulted from Al Faisali's walkout from a match Sunday against Al Qadissieh to protest the cancellation of their first goal.

A spokesman for the association, who asked not to be named, said the sports body decided to refer the case, where two referees were allegedly beaten by fans and administrators of Al Faisali eight minutes before the match ended, to its discipline committee.

The association meeting, which was chaired by Vice-President Saleh Irsheidat, also decided to postpone Al Faisali's next match against Al Wihdat, scheduled to take place on Friday, to the final week of the Premier League.

"The association has reviewed the protest by Al Faisali and referred it to the 'concerned committee,' the official told the Jordan Times after the three-hour meeting.

"A dialogue will be initiated between the association and the clubs to contain the crisis," he added.

Asked whether the association will punish Al Faisali for their walkout and "mistreatment" of referees, the official said: "We have our own regulations which will be implemented. The committee will study the case and take the decision in the coming 48 hours. I cannot predict what is going to happen but we shall approve their decision," the official added.

During their match on Sunday night, Al Faisali players protested a decision by referee Dirar Tamimi and first assistant Ma'amoun Alawneh to rule the match's only goal an offside.

(Continued on page 12)

Experts confirm nerve gas finding on Iraqi warheads

UNITED NATIONS (R) — International arms experts confirmed American tests showing Iraq had put the deadly nerve gas VX into warheads before the 1991 Gulf war, contrary to Baghdad's denials, a U.N. report said on Monday.

At the same time the report to the Security Council said tests done in a French government laboratory may have found traces of the same chemical. It also hinted that Iraq may have tried to decontaminate the samples between the first American tests and those conducted later in France and Switzerland.

The report was submitted by 17 scientists from seven countries who analysed government laboratory findings from the United States, France and Switzerland on samples or swabs of Iraqi warhead fragments.

Its conclusions signify that Baghdad probably had hidden information on its ability to put VX into warheads and now has to account for its past programme so U.N. inspectors can determine whether the dangerous arms were destroyed.

Iraq has admitted putting sarin, a gas that causes spasms, nausea and possible death, into warheads but has denied it was able to use VX in weapons or load it aboard missile warheads before the 1991 Gulf war.

(Continued on page 12)

Syria releases 2 Jordanians held on their way to Beirut

By Francesca Ciriaci and Mohammad Ben Hussein

AMMAN — A case of two Jordanian engineers held for questioning in Syria on their way to Beirut on Sunday was yet another typical example of the kind of behaviour which Jordan disapproves, one official said Monday.

"This is exactly what we object to: our citizens being questioned by the Syrian authorities and required to clear their records once (in Syria)," Information Minister Nasser Judeh told the Jordan Times in a telephone interview.

Mousa Hantash, a prominent Islamist, and Riad Abu Hazim were reported on Sunday to have been arrested in Syria while en route to Beirut to attend a meeting of the Union of the Arab Engineers along with another 130 Jordanian participants.

On Monday, one of the Jordanian participants in the Beirut conference said Hantash and Abu Hazim were held at the Jordanian-Syrian border, escorted to Damascus, questioned for around four hours by Syrian intelligence, and then released.

Another Jordanian engineer, Mohammad Juneidi, who tried to participate in the meeting of the Union of the Arab Engineers opening yesterday, was denied entry to Syria and was forced to return.

"We would rather accept this kind of behaviour," Judeh said commenting on Juneidi's case.

Local and international reports on the alleged arrests risked to worsen a war of words triggered by a statement last month by Syrian Defence Minister Mustafa Tlass questioning Jordan's role in the 1973 Arab-Israeli war.

The media and public opinion in the past few weeks stepped up a campaign for the release of hundreds of Jordanians held in Syrian jails without trial or who disappeared after passing through Syrian borders.

The government has responded by saying that it was doing all possible to secure their release through constant diplomatic and political action.

Hantash and Abu Hazim, however, will not be added to the official list recently made available to the Jordan Times of 239 Jordanians missing after entering Syria and 190 detained in Syrian jails.

(Continued on page 12)

Mulki, Sharon inaugurate Adassiya diversion wall project

By Ahmad Khatib

ADASSIYA — Work on a long-awaited JD1.65 million joint Jordanian-Israeli project to more effectively utilise 40 million cubic metres per year of the Yarmouk River's overflow began Monday at a groundbreaking ceremony near Jordan's northwestern border with Israel.

Minister of Water and Energy Hani Mulki and Israeli Minister of Foreign Affairs Ariel Sharon, who is in charge of the bilateral projects portfolio, inaugurated construction work of a diversion wall on the Yarmouk River downstream of Adassiya to replace sandbags, which have long been used as dams to divert the river's overflow directly to the King Abdullah Canal.

The two ministers cut a ribbon across a narrow river bridge spanning the river, while a bulldozer on the Jordanian side of the river, where the wall will be built, waited to move into action.

"This project, which should have been started two years ago, is a real message of peace that will support Jordan's rightful water share of the Yarmouk River," Mulki told reporters during the ceremony which also marked four years of the two countries' peace treaty.

Annex Two of the treaty specifically mentioned the Adassiya wall.

"Jordan will continue regaining its basic, necessary and legitimate water rights that will ease water shortage problem," Mulki added.

The minister said constructing such a wall does not contradict partnership with Syria regarding the long-delayed JD283 million Wihdeh (Unity) Dam on the Yarmouk River. The dam, agreed in 1987, would have a storage capacity of 225 million cubic metres.

The 40-kilometre-long river, which provides Jordan with 135 million cubic metres of water per year, originates in Syria, flows along the Syrian-Jordanian border and then joins with the Jordan River.

Sharon said the project is a beginning of a series of plans that would be implemented together with Jordan, adding that he was "happy with it" because it is part of the peace treaty that "we believe in and support with our hearts."

"We want to strengthen peace with Jordan and work hard together for a better future," said Sharon.

Israel would be able to divert 25 million cubic metres of Yarmouk's water per year after constructing the wall.

The project was designed and will be supervised and implemented by a Jordanian firm. It is funded by the Jordanian government and will be ready in nine months. It will have equipment to monitor water quality. Several logistical impediments on the Israeli side had caused the delay in implementing the project, some officials said.

Water experts explained that the 3.5-metre-high wall will not increase water quantity, but will regulate a year-round inflow of water to the 110-kilometre-long King Abdullah Canal.

According to official Jordanian figures, the country's population, increasing by 3.5 per cent annually, will need 1.2 billion cubic metres of water per year between 1998 and 2000. But the Kingdom's current water resources only reach to 960 million cubic metres a year.

Algerian journalists union calls strike for press freedom

Media action to join strikes by judges, teachers

ALGIERS (AFP) — The Algerian national journalists' union called on reporters to go on strike Tuesday to defend freedom of expression amid an apparent government crackdown on the press and growing social unrest.

The journalists' action will join a three-day strike by magistrates which began Monday as well as ongoing strikes by university teachers and students.

For the last 10 days seven national newspapers have suspended publication following an ultimatum delivered by the state-owned printing works to pay off debts or face a halt in printing.

The 48-hour Oct. 14 ultimatum targeting the outspoken dailies El Watan, Le Matin, La Tribune and Le Soir d'Algerie brought three other independent — Liberté, Al Khabar and the Quotidien d'Oran — out in support.

Calling the strike, the SNJ union said the apparently commercial decision by the printing works had been politically motivated.

It "undermines freedom of expression and the freedom of the press" and threatens the jobs of "dozens of employees", the SNJ said.

Omar Belhouche, the managing director of El Watan, told the daily Le Jeune Independent on Monday that the decision by the printing works was "strictly political".

The authorities have denied trying to muzzle the press, claiming the payments dispute is simply a "commercial" one and that the government-owned printing firms are under "independent management".

The ultimatum to the newspapers was interpreted widely as an attempt to curtail press freedom after attacks on Justice Minister Mohammad Adami and also on a close aide

of President Liamine Zeroul, his adviser Mohammad Betchine.

The private press published accusations by magistrates who claimed the minister was putting pressure on them. They also revealed certain "excesses" in Adami's private life.

The revelations eventually brought about Adami's resignation one week ago.

Betchine was forced to resign 24 hours after Adami following a press campaign exposing his "wheeling and dealing" and "abuses of power".

Dailies La Nouvelle and L'Authentique, which belongs to Betchine's family, did not go on sale on Oct. 18 in protest at the printing works ultimatum.

The press strike will add to growing social unrest in Algeria.

Algerian magistrates went on a three-day strike Monday

to protest against a press campaign which they say has "dragged judicial institutions through the mud".

The president of the national union of magistrates said the movement was to denounce the "inexplicable silence on the part of the authorities" over newspaper articles accusing magistrates of "incompetence and partiality".

Universities have been paralysed for a week by a strike by teachers demanding higher pay and better lodgings. Students have joined the strike to obtain the reintegration of students excluded for having failed for three years or more to get adequate grades. In 1996, teachers went on strike for three months.

The teachers' strike followed stoppages in recent weeks at Air Algérie, the national airline which was paralysed for two weeks and in the steel industry.



PIRATED EQUIPMENT DESTROYED IN DUBAI: Government officials in the Gulf Arab emirate of Dubai look on Monday as pirated video cassettes and equipment worth \$21 million is destroyed. The counterfeit videos were seized over a 12-month period (Reuters photo)

S. Arabia to expand cooperation with Pakistan

LAHORE (AFP) — Saudi Arabia on Monday agreed to give fresh impetus to its relations with Pakistan by enhancing bilateral cooperation in various fields including trade, investment and joint ventures, officials said.

The oil rich kingdom's decision was conveyed by visiting Saudi Crown Prince Abdullah Ben Abdul Aziz, who held wide-ranging talks with Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif lasting about two hours.

During the talks, the two sides held detailed discussions on the regional and global situation, with particular reference to the interests of the Muslim nation, they said.

The prince, who arrived here Sunday, "reaffirmed support for Pakistan's principled stand on Kashmir and its initiative to seek a just settlement" of the dispute with India, officials said.

He also appreciated the efforts Pakistan was making to bring peace and stability in Afghanistan, they said.

The two leaders underlined that while entering the new millennium, Pakistan-Saudi relations constitute "a pillar of strength and the unity" of Muslim World.

Prince Abdullah, expressing his "deep appreciation" for the warm welcome accorded to his delegation, said Saudi Arabia's wide ranging relations with Pakistan would gain "more depth and strength in the years to come", they said.

He lauded the efforts undertaken by the people of Pakistan for speedy progress and prosperity.

Sharif said the prince's visit had a "special significance for Pakistan".

The two Muslim countries enjoy "eternal bonds of faith, fraternal relations, similarity of views and commonality of perceptions manifested in strong cooperative and mutually beneficial ties", he said.

Sudan to pursue draft dodgers

KHARTOUM (AP) — Suffering an apparent shortage of men to fight southern rebels, the Sudanese government began a campaign Monday to arrest thousands of men evading conscription.

The campaign is the latest by the country's Islamist government to force men to take part in what it calls national service to fight in the increasingly unpopular

15-year civil war.

"Employees who resigned their jobs [to evade conscription] or refused to receive notice to join the army will be arrested while they are at home," said Kamal Hassan Ali, spokesman of the National Service Coordination Committee.

Evaders will face three years imprisonment. Ali was quoted as saying by the independent daily Alwan.

All Sudanese men are required to undergo military training, and President Omar Al Bashir announced in April that the government planned to recruit 655,000 students for the army.

The conscription system provoked a national outcry after at least 52 students were killed on April 2 while trying to escape a military training camp before being sent to the front.

'Turkey, Turk Cypriots plan joint exercises'

ANKARA (R) — Turkey is planning joint military manoeuvres with break-away Turkish northern Cyprus next month in response to Greek Cypriot exercises in the south, Anatolia news agency said on Monday.

Greece and the internationally recognised Greek Cypriot government completed six-day war games, involving some 10,000 Greek Cypriot reservists and conscripts, on the divided eastern Mediterranean island on Sunday.

NTV news channel quoted a Turkish official as saying Ankara, which has kept some 30,000 troops in the north of the island since 1974, would deploy

fighter planes briefly at a Turkish Cypriot air base for exercises.

NATO allies Greece and Turkey have long been at odds over Cyprus, divided since 1974 when Turkey invaded the northern third of the island in response to a military coup backed by Athens. A Turkish Cypriot government in the north is recognised only by Ankara.

Turkey sent fighter jets to north Cyprus last year after a visit by Greek warplanes to Paphos.

Greece has a defence pact with the internationally recognised Cyprus government, whose authority is in practice restricted to the south of the island.

Sudan's southern capital lives uneasily with civil war

JUBA (R) — Sudanese militiamen returning from patrol around the southern city of Juba shout "Allahu Akbar" (God is Great) as they climb down from their truck.

Yet to many of Juba's largely Christian population, the fervour of the volunteers appears like an alien presence. Some talk of the soldiers from the north as an "occupying force".

Juba, the traditional capital of Christian southern Sudan, is a garrison town of around 250,000 people — many of them refugees from years of fighting — and is in many ways a symbol of Sudan's fragmentation.

The rebel Sudan People's Liberation Army (SPLA) has never captured the city, set among gentle, fertile hills on the west bank of the Nile, though it has

been the SPLA's ultimate military target for 15 years.

Government forces are firmly in control and uniformed soldiers are everywhere.

But most are outsiders, Muslim volunteers with the Popular Defence Force (PDF), serving far from home.

"We cannot surrender. We cannot give up our country," says Dafa Allah Hasab Al Rasoul, a northern member of parliament who has volunteered for the PDF. "Here we are ready to stand or fall together."

Sudan's civil war is usually described as pitting the largely-Muslim, Arabised north against the black Christian or animist south, and exacerbated by a host of minor ethnic conflicts.

Khartoum prefers to talk of a struggle against foreign interference, and in Juba, the army proudly displays two tanks it says belonged to the Ugandan army until last month.

They were captured, it says, during an SPLA advance supported by a Ugandan infantry brigade and Eritrean tank crews.

Ultimately Khartoum accuses the United States of sponsoring a proxy war through Uganda and Eritrea aimed at destabilising the government.

But in Juba itself there is little sense of a city united against foreign aggressors.

Journalists — accompanied and directed at all times by northern Muslim soldiers — have little opportunity to talk to the local population.

On a rare occasion when the soldiers are shaken off, a brief interview with a local church leader paints a different picture.

"People are scared to speak freely," said the elder, a black southerner. "It is not tense between Muslims and Christians... It is tense between the occupying force and Christians."

He said Christians were largely free to practise their faith but there were still threats and persecution.

Three of his pastors working with the rural population were arrested in February and held for three months on suspicion of sympathising with the SPLA.

He said others disappeared from the town. "It is happening to many people, even to the soldiers. Those who are

thought to be opposed to the government are arrested and sometimes killed," he said.

The governor of Juba state, Henry Jad Zachariah, is a local Muslim convert from Christianity. "Christians in Juba have no problem with the northern government," he said. "There is freedom to practise their faith while Islamic Sharia laws... are not even applied here."

But the government clearly has a lot to do to capture the hearts and minds of the Christian population.

"People are fed up with war, but they lean towards the rebels," the church leader said. "Some of them even think it is better the town is captured."

NEWS IN BRIEF

Iraq accuses Israel of 'crocodile' operation

BAGHDAD (AP) — Deadly pens and exploding cigars? Amateur, Israeli spies — according to a popular Iraqi newspaper — are putting crocodile eggs in two lakes in northern Iraq. That ploy follows the release of "large quantities" of cobra snakes near Iraqi forces in the north, said Babel, a daily newspaper owned by Uday Hussein, the Iraqi president's eldest son. Adnan Mufi, a representative of the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan, which controls the region around the lakes of Dokan and Darbandi Khan, called the report "silly and stupid propaganda." "How can one do that in lakes where thousands of our people live and eat from their fish?" he said from Cairo, Egypt. The newspaper did not elaborate on the goal of the operation, and there was no immediate comment from Israeli officials.

'Five Iraqi officers killed by rebels'

CAIRO (AP) — At least five senior army officers were killed during fighting with Iraqi dissidents in southern Iraq this month, a key Iraqi opposition group said Monday. The Iraqi Communist Party, based in Kurdish-controlled northern Iraq, also reported widespread anti-government disturbances in the province of Nasiriyah, 380 kilometres south of Baghdad. The reports could not be independently confirmed, and there was no immediate word from the Iraqi government on any fighting.

Turkish forces kill 12 Kurds

DIYARBAKIR (R) — Turkish troops have killed 10 Kurdish guerrillas for the loss of two soldiers in the latest clashes in the southeast of the country, a security official said on Monday. The fighting follows a tense Turkish-Syrian row which ended last week with a deal banning the Kurdish Labour Party (PKK) leader Abdullah Ocalan and his guerrillas from Syria. The official said eight rebels and two soldiers were killed when PKK guerrillas ambushed troops in the mountains of Mardin province, close to Turkey's border with Syria. Two guerrillas were killed in a separate clash in Sinak province on Sunday in a large anti-PKK campaign in the southeast, he said.

Istanbul mayor resigns from party

ISTANBUL (R) — Istanbul's popular Islamist mayor announced on Monday he had resigned from his Virtue Party ahead of serving a jail sentence on charges of "inciting hatred." Recep Tayyip Erdogan was sentenced in April to 10 months prison for publicly reciting a poem seen by Turkey's secular establishment as encouraging Islamist movements. He would be the first senior member of the movement to be jailed since prosecutors launched a legal onslaught on its leading figures after banning their Welfare Party in January on accusations of threatening Turkey's secular constitution.

JORDAN TELEVISION

Tel. 4773111-19

PROGRAMME TWO

15:10 French Cartoon
15:30 Baras in Pyjamas
16:00 Life Choices
16:30 Small Talk
17:00 Doc - The Lions Kingdom
18:00 French Programmes
— Les Couches Brules
19:00 Le Journal
19:15 French Programme
— Fractales
19:30 News headlines
19:35 Step by Step
20:00 What Would You Do?
20:30 Drovers' Gold
21:05 You and your Car
21:30 UN Cut
22:00 News in English
22:30 Lonesome Dove
23:59 Feature film - The Falcon and the Snowman
01:30 End of T.X.

PRAYER TIMES

04:26 Fajr
05:43 (Sunrise) Dhuha
11:19 Dhuhr
14:27 'Asr
16:57 Maghreb
18:13 'Isha

CHURCHES

St. Mary of Nazareth Church
Sweifeh, Tel. 5920740
Assemblies of God Church Tel.
4632785
St. Joseph Church Tel. 4624590
Terra Sancta Church Tel.

4622366
Anglican Church Tel.
4624853/4624811.
St. Afrem Syrian Orthodox
Church Tel. 4771751.
Armenian International Church
Tel. 5865897
German-speaking Evangelical
Congregation Tel. 5688404
The Evangelical Local Church
in Amman Tel. 5811295
Church of Jesus Christ of Latter
Day Saints Tel. 4654932
St. John the Baptist at De la
Salle College Tel. 5661757
Church of the Annunciation
Tel. 4637440
Greek Orthodox Church Tel.
4646138
Church of Presentation, Sweifeh
Tel. 5920146
The United Catholic Church
Tel. 4624757
The English-Language
Catholic Parish Tel. 4614190
Evangelical Free Church Tel.
4892679
The Baptist Church Tel.
4628052
The Armenian Catholic
Church Tel. 4771331
The American Orthodox
Church Tel. 4775261

WEATHER

Bulletin supplied by the Department of Meteorology

JORDAN TIMES DAILY GUIDE AND CALENDAR

Moderate weather conditions will prevail with temperatures around average, clouds appearing at different altitudes, and winds westerly moderate. In Aqaba, winds will be northerly moderate and seas calm.

Amman 15/26
Aqaba 30/32
Deserts 13/29
Jordan Valley 19/33

Yesterday's high temperatures:
Amman 25, Aqaba 29 Humidity readings: Amman 28 per cent. Aqaba 60 per cent.
Following are the highest temperatures expected today in the following areas:
Ajloun 22
Jerash 28
Um Qays 26
Madaba 27
Petra 29
Dead Sea 33

USEFUL TELEPHONE NUMBERS

NIGHT DUTY
AMMAN:
Dr. Mohammad Shugair 4652693
Dr. Nidal Al As'ad 4751672
Dr. Abdul Rahim Mustafa 4744685
Dr. Issam Asmar 4890504
Al Asema pharmacy 4637055

Al Salam pharmacy 4636730
Shmeisani pharmacy 4637660
Nairoukh pharmacy 4623672

IRBID:
Dr. Mohammad Al Sani (02) 7100588
Al Quds pharmacy (—)

ZARQA:
Dr. Hafez Salafi (09) 914144
Khalifeh pharmacy (09) 985417

EMERGENCIES

Food Control Centre 4637111
Civil Defence Department 5661111
Civil Defence Immediate Rescue 4630341
Civil Defence Emergency 199
Rescue Police 192, 4621111, 4637777
Fire Brigade 4617101
Blood Bank 4775121
Highway Police 5343402
Traffic Police 4896390
Public Security Dept. 4630321
Hotel Complaints 5605800
Price Complaints 5661176
Water & Sewerage Complaints 4897467
Amman Municipality Complaints 4787111
Telephone Information (directory assistance) 121
Overseas Calls 0132
Central Amman Telephone Repairs 4623101

Abdali Tel. Repairs 5661101
Jordan Television 4773111
Radio 4774111
Water Authority 5680100
J. Electricity Authority 5815615
Electric Power Co. 4636381
RJ Flight Information 44-53300
Queen Alia Int. Airport 44-53300

HOSPITALS

AMMAN:
The Arab Centre for Heart and Special Surgery 5921199
The Islamic, Abdli 5666131/7
Hussein Medical Centre 5836856
Luzmila 4630195
Khalidi Maternity 4644281/6
Akhleh Maternity 4642441/2
Jabal Amman Maternity 4642362
Malhas, J. Amman 4636140
Palestine, Shmeisani 5607071
Shmeisani Hospital 5669131
Jordan Hospital 5607550
University Hospital 5353444
Al-Muasher Hospital 5667279
Al-Ahli, Abdli 56641646
Italian, Al-Muhagreen 4777101/3
Al-Bashir 4775111/26
Army, Marka 4891611/15
Queen Alia Hospital 5602240/50
Arnal Hospital 5674155

ZARQA:
Zarqa Govt. Hospital (09) 983323
Zarqa National Hospital (09) 900560

Ibn Sina Hospital (09) 986731
Al Hikma Modern Hospital (09) 990990

IRBID:
Princess Basma Hospital (02) 275555
Roman Catholic Hospital (02) 272275
Ibn Al Nafes Hospital (02) 7101372, (02) 7103101
Rosary Sisters Hospital (02) 7102831, (02) 7102011
Specialty Hospital (02) 7103100

AQABA:
Princess Haya Hospital (03) 2040111

FOR THE TRAVELLER QUEEN ALIA AIRPORT

This information is supplied by Royal Jordanian (RJ) information department at the Queen Alia International Airport Tel. (44) 53200-5, where it should always be verified. Information on other flights can be supplied on phone 44 (52700). Information on Royal Wings flights can be supplied on phone 4875301-5

ARRIVALS

Royal Jordanian (RJ) Flights
05:50 Dhahran (RJ)

07:15 Sanaa (RJ)
07:25 Aqaba (add) (RJ)
07:30 Damascus (RJ)
09:25 Abu Dhabi (RJ)
10:05 Muscat, Dubai (RJ)
10:15 Doha, Bahrain (RJ)
16:20 Cairo (RJ)
17:30 London, Frankfurt (RJ)
17:30 Chicago, Amsterdam (RJ)
22:10 Jarbah (Tunisia) (add) (RJ)
23:10 Beirut (RJ)

Other Flights

12:30 Aden (TY)
14:35 Istanbul (TK)
18:00 Dubai, Damascus (EK)
18:40 Beirut (ME)
18:45 Kiev (6U)
19:05 Paris (AF)
20:25 Tel Aviv (LY)
20:40 Cairo (MS)
22:25 London, Damascus (BA)
23:35 Amsterdam (KL)
23:55 Larnaca (CY)
00:55 Bucharest (RO)
02:00 Rome (AZ)

Royal Wings (RW) Flights

10:30 Aqaba (arriving at QAIA) (RW)
11:15 Aqaba (arriving at Marka Airport) (RW)
18:00 Aqaba (arriving at Marka Airport) (RW)
19:20 Tel Aviv (arriving at QAIA) (RW)
23:25 Aqaba (arriving at Marka Airport) (RW)

DEPARTURES

Royal Jordanian (RJ) Flights
05:00 Aqaba (add) (RJ)
08:25 Amsterdam, New York (RJ)
10:50 Berlin, Brussels (RJ)
11:05 Vienna, Frankfurt (RJ)
11:30 Geneva, Paris (RJ)
12:15 London (RJ)
12:30 Cairo (RJ)
13:20 Madrid (RJ)
14:00 Jarbah (Tunisia) (add) (RJ)
19:35 Beirut (RJ)
20:30 Jeddah (RJ)
21:00 Abu Dhabi, Dubai (RJ)
23:55 Damascus (RJ)

Other Flights
07:10 Frankfurt (LH)
13:30 Aden (TY)
15:35 Istanbul (TK)
19:00 Dubai (EK)
19:40 Kiev (6U)
20:00 Beirut (ME)
21:10 Tel Aviv (LY)
21:40 Cairo (MS)
00:35 Amsterdam (KL)
01:55 Bucharest (RO)
03:00 Rome (AZ)

Royal Wings (RW) Flights
08:00 Aqaba (from Marka Airport) (RW)
09:30 Aqaba (from Marka Airport) (RW)
17:30 Tel Aviv (from Marka Airport) (RW)
21:30 Aqaba (from QAIA) (RW)

Police detain suspected murderer of year's 17th 'honour' victim

By Rana Hussein

AMMAN — Police are holding a 29-year-old man who on Sunday allegedly shot and killed his married sister for suspected "immoral behaviour," according to an official source.

The source told the Jordan Times that the 36-year-old victim, identified only as J.K., was shot several times in the Salalem neighbourhood of Salt by her brother A.K., who "surrendered to police shortly after the incident claiming it was a crime of honour."

"The victim's husband was in the West Bank, and her brother heard that she was having immoral relationships and killed her," the source told the Jordan Times on Monday.

Police contacted by the Jordan Times yesterday evening confirmed that a woman was killed in Salalem but refused further comment.

The victim was the 17th woman reportedly killed in the Kingdom this year in the "name of honour."

Last year, 25 women were reportedly killed in Jordan by men for the same reasons.

Two-year-old still critical following attack

Meanwhile, a two-year-old girl admitted to hospital last Tuesday after her throat was allegedly slashed by her father is still in critical condition; officials said.

The source said police arrested the child's 66-year-old father, who reportedly confessed to authorities that he attempted to kill his daughter while she was sleeping "because he wanted to take revenge on his third wife following a quarrel."

"The child is still being treated at the intensive care unit at Al Bashir Hospital, but it is not clear yet if she will survive," the source told the Jordan Times on Monday.

The victim was discovered by her older sister, who rushed her to the hospital.



Prime Minister Fayez Tarawneh and his Yemeni counterpart, Abdul Karim Iryani, address the press following the conclusion of the Higher Jordanian-Yemeni Joint Committee meeting in Amman (Photo by Hatem Ali)

Higher Jordanian-Yemeni committee concludes meeting

14 agreements on bilateral cooperation signed

AMMAN (Petra) — The Higher Jordanian-Yemeni Joint Committee, co-chaired by Prime Minister Fayez Tarawneh and his Yemeni counterpart Abdul Karim Iryani, Monday concluded its two-day discussions on bilateral cooperation in several fields.

At the conclusion of the meeting, the two sides issued a joint statement giving details of the talks and outlining future steps to enhance bilateral ties.

The statement noted that in the political field, the two sides expressed satisfaction with the present level of cooperation and coordination and signed a number of agreements and protocols.

The statement said the two countries hold similar views on common Arab issues and support moves to improve inter-Arab relations, including the Arab League's endeavours.

On the peace process, Jordan and Yemen expressed their support for efforts to implement U.N. Security Council Resolutions 242 and 338 on the basis of exchanging land for peace and for the recent Palestinian-Israeli accord signed in Washington last week as

well as for the Palestinian National Authority in its drive to regain legitimate Palestinian rights.

Two sides welcomed the recent accord reached by Syria and Turkey that defused a crisis over alleged support to Kurdish rebels. They expressed concern over the continued suffering of the Iraqi people and called on the world community to take steps toward ending Iraq's ordeal. The two sides welcomed the U.N. secretary general's efforts to have the sanctions on Libya lifted and appealed to Ethiopia and Eritrea to end their dispute peacefully.

In trade and investment, Jordan and Yemen called for promoting the two countries' private sectors and agreed to implement a 1995 trade agreement and to sign a memorandum of understanding for the creation of a free trade zone within six months.

Jordan and Yemen said they will implement a protocol on technical cooperation which they said would open the way for investment projects in the two countries.

Jordan and Yemen said they will enact a protocol concluded by their chambers

of industry and trade, exchange statistical, specifications and standards expertise, and train Yemeni personnel at the Royal Scientific Society.

The two sides signed an agreement to prevent dual taxation and to implement a memorandum of understanding between the customs departments of the two countries.

In the field of energy and water, the two sides expressed full support for the implementation of a memorandum of understanding concluded on Oct. 18 on exchanging expertise in electricity and mineral resources. They also agreed that Jordan will train Yemeni personnel in energy-related affairs.

In agriculture, the two sides agreed to renew an agreement signed in 1995, exchange agricultural products in accordance with an agreed timetable and begin cooperation between the Jordanian and Yemeni organisations in charge of promoting and marketing the sale of agricultural products.

In transport, the two sides agreed on steps to promote maritime, air and land transport. The two countries

agreed to prepare an executive programme for implementing a land and maritime agreement, offer facilities in ports for exchanged goods and retain the present agreement on air transport. Jordan offered to conduct maintenance on Yemeni aircraft and train airline personnel.

The two sides agreed on exchanging expertise in post and telecommunications, providing health and medical treatment for Yemeni patients in Jordanian hospitals and registering pharmaceutical products.

The two sides signed protocols on cooperation in the fields of vocational training, judicial affairs, sports and youth, culture, tourism, information and civil service.

In all, Jordan and Yemen signed 14 agreements and memoranda of understanding.

The Yemeni delegation was received by His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan, the Regent, and conveyed a message from Yemeni President Ali Abdullah Saleh.

The Yemeni prime minister later visited Sahab Industrial Estate and inspected a number of businesses.

Alleged teenage murderer retracts confessions in court

By Rana Hussein

AMMAN — Sa'eed Qashash, the 19-year-old accused of murdering 12 people, including 11 family members, Monday retracted confessions he made earlier and told the Criminal Court that four other persons were the actual killers.

Qashash's statements were a turning point in the two-month-old trial.

After his arrest one day following the crime, the defendant reportedly confessed to authorities that he killed his father, mother, other family members and a friend on June 10 because they were harassing him about his academic performance.

But on Monday, Qashash, standing calmly in a prisoner's cage, told the courtroom that four persons, including a woman, came to his home on the morning of the incident claiming to be employees of the Statistics Department.

"The four entered the house and started searching for computer diskettes" that belonged to his brother

Mohammad, who is an engineer and was one of the victims in the mass murder, Qashash said.

"I brought my gun and tried to stop them, but they overpowered me and took the gun from me. Then they gave me water to drink, and I lost consciousness," he added.

During that time, he maintained, "I recall seeing them shooting at my family, and that was the last thing I remember."

The following day, he said, he woke up and found his family all dead, took his brother-in-law's car, drove to his school, sat for one of the lawjahi exams, then he took his friends for a ride.

Following the defendant's 10-minute testimony, his lawyer appealed to the court to refer Qashash for a psychiatric examination.

The attorney had appealed once in the past for such an examination, but "Qashash himself refused this request and stated he was mentally fit to stand trial."

The murder victims included his mother Tharayah, 50, his father Amin,

57, his sisters Karimah, 25, Mirvat, 17, Wafa, 9, and Insaf, 27, her 30-year-old husband, Jamal Turk, and their two children, Halah, 2, and Zaid, 3, as well as his brothers Mohammad, 30, and Mustafa, 17. Qashash's school friend Ata Shazlan was also killed.

According to the prosecution charge sheet, the suspect allegedly lured the victims one after the other to the basement of the family's house, shot each of them while they had their backs to him, then piled their bodies and sealed the basement's doors with bricks and cement.

If convicted of all 12 counts of premeditated murder pressed against him by the prosecution, Qashash could face the death penalty.

None of the victims' relatives dropped charges against the defendant.

The court tribunal, comprising Justices Mohammad Ajameh, Mifteh Mubeidin and Issa Hamdan, adjourned the trial to Oct. 31 to hear the prosecution's witnesses.

Country's water losses due largely to metre-tampering — Mulki

By Ahmad Khatib

AMMAN — Minister of Water and Energy Hani Mulki has said that unaccounted water losses are due in large part to illegal tampering with water meters, which he estimated causes more than 25 per cent of water losses in the country.

Worn-out water networks, he said, are another major problem.

"We are working hard to replace all broken water networks in order to stop these losses, but this is not enough; irresponsible and illegal water use must be stopped," Mulki told reporters during a two-hour seminar held at the Jordan Press Foundation Sunday.

He added that from now until the end of November, the ministry will be ready to fix all "broken" metres at no charge and exempt citizens from charges for water which they used "in one way or another" but had not paid for.

"In order to save this precious resource and reduce its cost, I urge citizens to use water supplies legally and responsibly," the minister said. "If this procedure does not solve the issue, the government will have to stop supplying people using water illegally."

According to Mulki, the ministry spent JD11 million to repair Irbid governorate's water network in order to contain water leakage estimated at 58 per cent.

"However, water losses dropped by only 11 per cent, which means that 47 per cent is still used illegally," Mulki said.

He said several government studies will be conducted throughout the Kingdom to determine the extent of water losses, and more laws will be enacted to stop illegal use, which is "one of the biggest problems that faces a country like Jordan."

"Such illegal actions must

be stopped at any price," the minister stressed.

According to some studies cited in recent news reports, in 1995 the ministry pumped 50,220 million cubic metres of water to Amman, but 28,011 million cubic metres were lost.

A survey conducted recently among 184 citizens in the Tabarbour area of Amman revealed that 50 per cent of the residents were using water supplies illegally either by breaking metres or tampering with them.

Another study said water metre readings are sometimes less than 38 per cent of the actual amount of water consumed by citizens.

Two weeks ago, Ministry Secretary General Qusai Qusai announced that a four-year contract would be given to a private operator that will be responsible for distribution, maintenance, meter-reading, billing and collection services.

What's going on

CONCERT

* Musical performance by Lexi Haddadin (soprano) and Mohammad Othman Sidiq (piano) at the Union Bank for Investment and Savings hall on Wednesday, Oct. 28 at 8:00 p.m. (The programme features songs from opera works set to music by Verdi, Mozart and Strauss as well as Arab songs by the Rahabani Brothers).

FILMS

* "Jack and Sam" at the British Council, Jabbal Amman at 6:00 p.m. (Another film entitled "Shakespeare, the Animated Tales — Hamlet" will be shown on Wednesday Oct. 28 at 5:00 p.m.)

SYMPOSIUM

* Symposium on "Woman's Status and Rights" (in English) with the participation of Berlin senator Ms. Renate Neubert, Lawyer Asma Khader, and legal advisor Rihab Qaddoumi (sponsored by the Goethe Institut) at Radisson SAS Hotel on Wednesday Oct. 28 (9:00 a.m.-2:00 p.m.).

LECTURE

* "Schiller on Art and Society" (in English) by Professor Nicholas Linfield at Darat Al Funun, Jabbal Weibdeh on Tuesday Oct. 27 at 6:00 p.m.

CONCERT

* Musical performance by Freddy for Music at the Royal Cultural Centre at 7:00 p.m. (Daily until Oct. 29).

EXHIBITIONS

* "Masterworks of the Spanish Contemporary Architecture and Presentation of Architecture Guide: Spain 1920-2000" at Instituto Cervantes, Jabbal Amman, until Nov. 6.

* Display of sculptures, album of 12 silk screens, ink drawings, and other artwork by artist Mona Saudi at her residence, Abdoun, Mustafa Kamel Street (Telephone 5929700), until Oct. 29.

* Ceramics by Ra'ed and Ahmad Al Delaimi at Hammurabi Arts Gallery, Gardens St. (Tel. 5536098), until Nov. 5.

* Display of autumn collection at The Jordan Design and Trade Centre, off Wadi Sagra St. until Oct. 31 (Tel. 5699141/2).

* Exhibition of works by Palestinian artist Kamal Boullata entitled "Homage to Jerusalem," an exhibition of paintings by late Palestinian artist Zulfia Al Sa'di, an exhibition by Palestinian-American photographer Sa'ad Nuseibah entitled "The Farthest Mosque" at Darat Al Funun, Jabbal Weibdeh, until Nov. 12 (Tel. 4643251/2).

* "Calligraphy on Crafts" at the Jordan Craft Centre (Al Aydi), Jabbal Amman (Tel. 4644555), until October 31.

Missing archaeologist found unharmed in Dana Nature Reserve

By a Staff Reporter

AMMAN — A 63-year-old Iraqi archaeologist who went missing for three nights after leaving her campsite in the Dana Nature Reserve was found unharmed Monday by Royal Society for the Conservation of Nature rangers, according to officials.

Amal Khudeiri, who checked in at the camp on Thursday evening, was last seen by campers in the

early hours of Friday.

"We found the woman sitting behind a tree Monday morning near Ruman Mountain near the campsite," the official said.

Upon questioning her, the official added, she informed them that she went off the designated paths and lost her way.

"She slept in the wilderness for three nights and had no food or water," the official said.

Rescue teams. RCSN

rangers, police, helicopters and police dogs had combed a 10-kilometre radius around the campsite in an attempt to locate the woman.

"This incident is rare in this area, because we usually inform visitors and campers of the paths and tracks they need to follow," the official stated.

According to the official, the woman is being kept under observation at Prince Zeid Hospital in Tafleh.

The woman is expected to be released from hospital today, the official said.

The Dana project was initiated by the RCSN in 1993 in an effort to revive the endangered ecosystem of Dana's over-hunted and over-grazed land.

It is home to over 25 species of animals that are threatened or considered globally important, such as the ibex, wolves, hyenas and foxes.

Saudi motorcyclists end Jordan leg of Mideast tour

By Munther Murjan

AMMAN — A five-man team of Saudi trekkers ended the Jordan leg of their special Middle East mission yesterday, made all the more special as they did it on motorcycles.

The team, consisting of three motorcyclists and two repair technicians, want to use the tour to improve the image of Islam, fight drug abuse and call for Arab and Islamic unity.

They will return to Saudi Arabia to await the shipment of their vehicles to their next scheduled destination — Egypt.

"The idea of the trip was a long-time dream of ours," said Awad Autabei, leader of the team. "This is the second phase of our trip."

The first phase of the mission was a 33-day voyage last year that took the team through the Gulf countries.

"We expect this phase to take 48 days, and it includes visiting Jordan, Egypt, Libya and Tunisia before returning to Saudi Arabia," Autabei said.

He added that the group wants "to show that Islam does not encourage terrorism and that fighting occupation forces is different from cold-blooded murder. In every country we visit, we try to spread these principles at press conferences."

According to Autabei, the team faced few difficulties apart from "the usual, such as weather conditions and mechanical failures."

The trip was coordinated by the ministries of interior of every Arab country on the team's itinerary.

Saudi Prince Nayef Ben Sultan was also involved with the coordination and financing of the trip, which has so far cost 65,000 Saudi riyals. "Prince

Nayef also provided us with motorcyclists and the technical escort car," Autabei added.

The Saudi motorcyclists said they have attracted much attention from government officials, ordinary citizens and the media.

"I hope we get the same media attention from both people and government officials [on the rest of the trip] as we did here," Autabei said.

On Sunday, the Public Security Department Director Nasouh Muhieddin met with the team to discuss combating drug abuse, praising their efforts to spread awareness about its danger.

The team's future plans include a campaign to encourage people to donate organs to people who need them. "We will start the campaign in Saudi Arabia and hopefully we spread it across the Arab and Islamic countries," Autabei said.

NEWS IN BRIEF

Tarawneh, Srou discuss regional issues

AMMAN (Petra) — Prime Minister Fayez Tarawneh on Monday met with the speaker of the Lower House of Parliament, Sa'd Hayel Srou, to discuss domestic, regional and international issues. They also discussed the upcoming meeting between Tarawneh and members of the House's Finance Committee to review the country's economic situation as well as Tarawneh's meeting next week with deputies to review the Palestinian-Israeli accord signed in Washington last Friday.

Rifai leaves for Algeria

AMMAN (Petra) — Senate President Zeid Rifai left Amman on Monday at the head of an official parliamentary delegation for a visit to Algeria at the invitation of Basir Abu Mizah, the speaker of the Algerian national assembly. Rifai, who is carrying a message from HRH Crown Prince Hassan, the Regent, to President Liamine Zeroual, will meet with Algerian officials.

Sanctions Committee approves contracts

AMMAN (Petra) — The U.N. Sanctions Committee has approved 15 contracts by Jordanian firms to sell \$15.12 million worth of products to Iraq under the U.N.-Iraq oil-for-food deal. A source at the Ministry of Industry and Trade said that with this approval, the committee has endorsed Jordanian contracts worth a total of \$378.835 million to date.

Studies on 'Millennium Bug' problem

AMMAN (Petra) — The Cabinet has entrusted the National Information Centre to prepare a working paper on the Year 2000, or Millennium Bug, computer problem and to report to the government within two weeks. Working in conjunction with other concerned departments, the centre will define the problem and prepare a report for study at a meeting to be chaired by the prime minister.

Delegation leaves for Euro-Med meeting

AMMAN (Petra) — A parliamentary delegation Monday left Amman for Brussels to attend a meeting of the European-Mediterranean Parliamentary Forum, due to open on Oct. 27. The delegation, led by Senator Marwan Dufin, will discuss ways for promoting relations between European parliaments and their counterparts in countries around the Mediterranean Sea.

Yugoslavia moves to comply, NATO watches on

BRUSSELS (R) — Yugoslav President Slobodan Milosevic has agreed to make troop withdrawals which would put him in substantial compliance with immediate United Nations demands on Kosovo, diplomatic sources said Monday.

If the withdrawals are carried out in the coming 24 hours NATO will not carry out its threat to bomb Yugoslav military targets after a Tuesday 1900 GMT deadline, they added.

The Supreme Allied Commander Europe, General Wesley Clark, and General Klaus Naumann, head of NATO's military committee, held 16 hours of talks Saturday and Sunday with Milosevic and Yugoslav Army Chief of Staff General Momcilo Perisic.

They went into the fine detail of compliance on security demands, setting a schedule for moving non-Kosovo army units back towards their home bases, reducing numbers of special police and removing heavy weapons, NATO military sources said.

The generals briefed the Alliance Monday on the pledges they had secured. NATO ambassadors were to meet again Tuesday at 1630 GMT shortly before the deadline.

"We think the message has been received," a NATO official told reporters afterwards. "They have made a number of undertakings to move towards compliance in the next 24 hours." "This is the moment of truth. He (Milosevic) has to get his skates on in the next 24 hours," the official said.

A diplomat said Yugoslavia could now avoid NATO strikes.

"Milosevic did agree to undertake the list of things they went down with (to Belgrade)," he told Reuters. "If he does those things — and there is evidence today that he has started — then he will not be in full

compliance but he will have done those things necessary to stave off military action at this time," the diplomat said.

The NATO official was more cautious, saying he would not prejudice what NATO ambassadors would decide at their meeting Tuesday to determine the fate of their ultimatum to Belgrade threatening air strikes.

He said Western observers on the ground would be out checking in the field if Milosevic was keeping his promises.

"NATO has not changed any of its decisions," the official said.

The allies would continue to be "very, very vigilant." "We won't be satisfied with one or two media-staged events."

We will not base our decisions on one or two film clips. We are not in any way going to declare victory until these (commitments) have been translated into concrete actions." The details of what Milosevic has agreed to remained secret, possibly for security reasons, possibly to save face. NATO has insisted repeatedly that the weekend talks were in no way a negotiation, simply a highly detailed re-statement of demands.

"We don't believe a blow-by-blow account of the units we are focusing on will help at this stage," the official said. "The only person who needs to have the details is the man who gives the orders — President Milosevic." The NATO official said the strength of Yugoslav security forces in Kosovo had to be returned to its February-March baseline, when the guerrilla war erupted in earnest.

NATO was insisting that units from outside Kosovo province were to be outside Kosovo and moving "in the direction of going back to their barracks," he said. The army was less of a concern than the special police.

Units normally stationed inside Kosovo would also return to their barracks or cantonments inside the province. Asked if the demands could be accomplished in 24 hours, the official replied: "Absolutely. Kosovo is not a very big place."

In Kosovo Monday, Serbian security forces appeared to be standing down in parts of the province.

Large traffic jams formed on roads entering the capital Pristina from the west as truckloads of troops rumbled into a major garrison at the north end of town.

Twenty km to the west on the main highway through central Kosovo, Serbian military police dismantled a major sandbagged checkpoint at the strategic Komorane crossroads.

The independent Serbian news agency Beta quoted a source close to the Yugoslav army general staff as saying troops would complete withdrawals to garrisons in Kosovo Monday.

An array of combat aircraft and warships has been assembled for a NATO military operation, including U.S. air- and sea-launched cruise missiles which could carry out the initial "limited" air option the allies have authorised.

They gave Clark the green light to take military action earlier this month but suspended it for four days. They later extended the ultimatum by a further 10 days, producing what the official said was "a distinct turn for the better."

If the allies Tuesday judge Milosevic is keeping his pledges and making the irreversible troop withdrawals they stipulate in the time set, they may rescind the order.

However, they may decide that only a continued threat of military intervention can ensure that all agreements are adhered to, and they may extend it with a new date or indefinitely.



A Yugoslav army convoy withdraws from its position in Kosovo's countryside and returns to its barracks in Pristina on a rainy morning. A NATO ultimatum for the withdrawal was set to expire Tuesday morning (Reuters photo)

Yeltsin cancels trip to Austria

MOSCOW (AP) — Doctors ordered President Boris Yeltsin to cancel a trip to Austria because of extreme fatigue and recommended he take a vacation, the Interfax news agency said Monday. The announcement, two weeks after Yeltsin cut short a trip to Central Asia, raises new questions about his ability to stay in office.

Prime Minister Yevgeny Primakov will make the trip to Vienna for talks with the European Union Tuesday instead, Interfax said, quoting presidential spokesman Dmitry Yakushkin.

Yakushkin said Yeltsin was suffering from an "asthenic condition," that made him very weak and tired, both physically and emotionally. Asthenia refers to a lack of bodily strength.

Yeltsin's blood pressure was also unstable, Yakushkin said.

The Kremlin refused to confirm the reports to The Associated Press.

Yeltsin has been weakened by recurring health problems in recent years, including heart bypass surgery in 1996. The president and his doctors insist that Yeltsin will serve out the less than two years that remain of his term, and they deny that he has crippling health problems.

Yeltsin was forced to cut short a trip to Central

Asia earlier this month because of a respiratory infection. Doctors said last week he had recovered, but Yeltsin has still not returned to work at the Kremlin full time. The trip to Vienna had been reduced to one day from the originally scheduled two days.

Yakushkin said a committee of doctors that usually meets before Yeltsin travels recommended he cancel his visit to Austria. It said Yeltsin had not followed doctors' advice to stay home and recuperate from the respiratory infection that curtailed his Central Asian trip.

This, coupled with work pressures, caused him to become extremely tired, he said.

"Doctors unanimously voted for cancelling the trip," Yakushkin said. He said there were no plans to hospitalise Yeltsin.

Yakushkin said earlier Monday that the Russian leader was working at a country residence outside of Moscow and was preparing for the trip to Austria.

In Vienna, Yeltsin had been scheduled to meet with Austrian Chancellor Viktor Klima, the present holder of the rotating European Union chairmanship.

The two were expected to discuss security issues, including the recent Middle East peace agree-

ment and the crackdown on ethnic Albanians in Yugoslavia's Kosovo province, and Russia's economic crisis.

Yeltsin's itinerary also called for him to meet with International Monetary Fund and World Bank officials to discuss economic assistance.

Russia has said it is counting on further disbursements of a \$22.6 billion bailout package to pay its bills for the rest of the year. The IMF froze the loan after Russia's latest economic crisis erupted in mid-August, and has said it will not deliver any more payments until it sees signs that Russia has a plan for coping with its troubles.

Russian media have speculated that Yeltsin will not undertake any more foreign trips, but Interfax said Monday that a visit to India in December is still on.

Yeltsin also plans several meetings in November with foreign guests, including Japanese Prime Minister Keizo Obuchi, German Chancellor-elect Gerhard Schröder, Italian President Oscar Luigi Scalfaro and Queen Beatrix of The Netherlands, Interfax said, quoting the deputy head of the presidential administration, Sergei Prikhodko.

NEWS IN BRIEF

Bucharest elections declared void after 34 per cent turnout

BUCHAREST (AFP) — Romanian authorities declared Sunday's municipal elections in Bucharest as null and void after only 34 per cent of the 1.6 million electorate cast their vote. Under Romanian law, the first round of the election is only valid if voter turnout exceeds 51 per cent. The electoral commission confirmed Monday the ballot will be held next Sunday and will be decided on a majority vote regardless of turnout. A lacklustre campaign, focusing on issues such as garbage collection, street repairs and the proliferation of stray dogs, failed to capture the interest of voters in the capital. Sunday's turnout was the lowest since the fall of the Communist regime in 1989.

Title but no crown for new Miss Croatia

ZAGREB, Croatia (AP) — She has the title, but not the crown. Two weeks after a Muslim was proclaimed Miss Croatia, the jury reversed itself and crowned runner-up, Ivana Petkovic. In a sombre atmosphere, broadcast live on national television late Sunday, 12 members of the jury chose Petkovic, while five voted for Lejla Schovic. The new winner said she was "as excited as during the first voting" and that she entered the new round of voting "with pure motives." Schovic left in tears, after she was not allowed to give a statement. "I wanted to say that this was a set-up, that the new voting is a farce," the newspaper Vecernji List quoted her as saying. This year's beauty contest, popular among Croats, turned into a national scandal, when organisers stripped Schovic of her title, citing voting irregularities. But in the country where many people do not consider Muslims "real" Croats, the contest became a political issue, with Croatian media and some human rights groups saying Schovic was ousted just because she's a Muslim. Croatia, which has a small Muslim minority, supported Croats in neighbouring Bosnia during their 1993-4 conflict with Muslims there and relations between the two remain tense. About 80 per cent of Croatia's 4.7 million people are Roman Catholics. After the first contest, media reported that organisers were unhappy with a Muslim representing Croatia at the Miss World contest. But chief organiser, Milan Sockovic, denied politics played a role in the reversal. He insisted that the first voting was irregular and turned to the Miss World organiser, Eric Morley, for advice. Morley recommended new voting. Four members of the jury, who earlier openly supported Schovic, refused to appear at Sunday's voting. Without music, fireworks or an audience, Petkovic received the traditional lace and flowers. She also left without the crown, because it is still with Schovic, who threatens to sue the organisers.

Computer discovers breast cancer earlier

STOCKHOLM (AFP) — Swedish researchers have developed a computer programme to detect breast cancer in its early stages, and they intend to put their system on the Internet, the daily Svenska Dagbladet said Monday. The researchers at Lund, in the far south of Sweden, said they had developed a new system using six different computer programmes to facilitate the reading of X-ray information. Reading and interpreting mammogram images is a complicated and time-consuming task for radiologists, and a worldwide effort has been put into simplifying the methods. The Swedish team said that with their system even the smallest changes in the breasts show up clearly on a computer screen. Experienced mammography interpreters "told" the computer which changes were relevant and which were not, they said. Their ambition was to create a cheap and simple software applicable to several digital systems. The research team planned to make their system widely available on the Internet. Researchers said the need was growing as the bulk of experienced mammography doctors were approaching retirement and recruitment levels had been poor.

Fire on Italian ship kills one, injures five off Danish coast

ESBJERG, Denmark (AFP) — One Filipino sailor died and five other sailors were injured when fire broke out overnight on an Italian freighter west of the Danish port of Esbjerg, Danish shipping officials said Monday. Police were questioning survivors as to the cause of the accident, which hit the Pallas, bound for Casablanca in Morocco, early Monday. Sixteen of the 17 crew, made up of Poles, Yugoslavs, Bulgarians and Filipinos, were rescued by two Danish and German helicopters after jumping into the sea. The five injured crew members were admitted to hospital. The ship is owned by Italy's Bugati Shipping Services.

Long-forgotten amateur movies of Hitler found in U.S. home

HAMBURG, Germany (AP) — Four reels of amateur movies shot by Adolf Hitler's personal pilot showing the Nazi leader touring occupied Paris and consoling war wounded have surfaced in the Tennessee basement of a former U.S. Army officer, a newsmagazine reported Monday. Sgt. Herbert St. Goar headed an intelligence branch of the U.S. military government in Germany when he came across the 12 tin cans containing the movies in the winter of 1945-46. Der Spiegel reported. Most were sent back to the War Ministry in Washington, but four he sent home to Chattanooga, Tennessee, where they eventually ended up gathering dust in his basement. The candid movies show Hitler's travels around Europe in the 1930s, from meetings with Benito Mussolini in Rome in 1938 to a quick tour of just-occupied Paris on June 28, 1940. The Paris trip includes the only known shots in colour of Hitler visiting with German war wounded, Spiegel said. Such scenes were usually not allowed by the German Propaganda Ministry. Der Spiegel said St. Goar recently remembered the rolls of film and decided to make them available to researchers. Hans Guenther Voigt from the Berlin Federal Film Archive called the reels "authentic" and "extremely interesting as contemporaneous documentation." Christian Hartmann from the Munich Institute for Contemporary History called them "an important addition" to other film material about Hitler.

Portuguese writer Jose Cardoso Pires dies

LISBON (AFP) — Jose Cardoso Pires, widely considered to be one of Portugal's most important contemporary writers, has died at the age of 73, his family said Monday. Pires, who won the 1991 Latin Union literature prize, had been hospitalised in a coma since July this year. In 1995, the writer lost his memory for a week after a stroke, an experience he captured in the book "Des Profundis - Valsa Lenta" (Slow Waltz).

Spain says Basque election results favour peace

VITORIA, Spain (AP) — Basque regional elections, the first since armed separatists declared a cease-fire five weeks ago, opened the door wider to peace, the Spanish government said Monday.

Basques crowded the polls in record numbers Sunday, favouring more extreme versions of the region's traditional split between those who seek independence and those who oppose it.

But Interior Minister Jaime Mayor Oreja told national Spanish radio that the result was "the best possible for peace," because the Popular Party of Prime Minister Jose Maria Aznar was now an undisputed major force within the regional Basque Parliament.

Mayor Oreja said that with the rise of the Popular Party, the Basque parliament could not disregard that "plurality is the essence of the Basque Country."

The government has not indicated what Aznar's next step will be. He had taken a tough stance since the armed separatist group ETA declared a cease-fire, insisting that the group accept the election results and give up its arms for talks to go forward.

ETA supporters have urged the government, as a gesture of goodwill, to transfer separatist prisoners scattered around the country to institutions in the Basque country.

Euskal Herriarrok,

politically allied with the ETA commandos, said the election favoured independence. The party is a new name for the traditional Herri Batasuna coalition.

The party spokesman, Arnaldo Otegi, told the Barcelona daily La Vanguardia that the strong support for Basque nationalist parties was a vote for "peace, liberty and self-determination." Otegi said his party would not join any coalition government, but would be an active participant in parliament, La Vanguardia reported Monday.

Although the lineup in the 75-seat parliament between pro-independence and anti-independence seats basically stayed the same, there were important changes in the makeup on each side of the aisle.

The voters, more than 70 per cent of those registered turned out, cast ballots giving three separatist parties a total of 41 seats and four parties opposed to breaking up Spanish union, 35 seats, similar to the existing lineup.

The separatist Basque Nationalist Party dropped a seat, but won 21, enough to give it the right to form the government.

Juan Jose Ibarretxe, Nationalist Party leader charged with seeking a coalition government, said Monday: "Let's see what we can do in this country without excluding anybody." But the political

map's variations are what encouraged Oreja and others to see the elections as the curtain raiser to a more vigorous peace process.

The big winners were Aznar's Popular Party and the Euskal Herriarrok (Herri Batasuna) political coalition linked to the ETA.

Aznar's Popular Party jumped from 11 to 16 seats to become the second most popular party in the regional parliament.

The party is strongly identified with the Spanish government's tough anti-terrorist policies and totally opposed to making concessions to ETA or changing the constitution to allow Basque secession.

The Socialist Party, the main opposition to Aznar's government in the national parliament but on the same side of the fence in the Basque country, gained two seats to total 14, although it fell from second to fourth place in the voting.

Euskal Herriarrok gained two seats to 14, becoming the third largest electoral force.

ETA — the letters stand in the Basque language for Basque Homeland and Freedom — has killed nearly 800 people since 1968, but declared an open-ended cease-fire on Sept. 18 amid mounting pressure for a negotiated end to one of Western Europe's last armed conflicts.

New German parliament elects easterner Thierse as speaker

BONN (AFP) — Germany's new parliament Monday overwhelmingly elected east German Social Democrat (SPD) Wolfgang Thierse as its speaker Monday.

The vote was 512-109 for, with 45 abstentions. Thierse, 55, a former civil servant in communist East Germany, has led the SPD in that part of the country since reunification in 1990.

He replaces Rita Suessmuth of outgoing Chancellor Helmut Kohl's conservative Christian Democratic

Union (CDU) party.

The SPD and its ally, the Greens, have a 21-seat majority after winning general elections on September 27, making Wolfgang Thierse, 54, a shoo-in.

Thierse, a tall, red-bearded man with a professorial air, was a literature and arts student at university and joined the East German culture ministry in 1975, in the architecture department.

But he did not sign up with the East German Communist Party and

lost his job in 1976 when he defied dissident singer Wolf Biermann, who was banned by the regime.

Thierse then worked quietly at the literature institute, the Academy of Sciences in East Berlin, until the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989.

He has in recent years been the spokesman in Bonn for eastern Germany, criticising the slow rate of development there and in 1991 campaigning for the government to move the capital from Bonn to Berlin.



Archbishop Desmond Tutu, chair of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC), ponders a point ahead of this week's planned release of the commission's final report. The report, detailing Human Rights abuses committed under apartheid, is due to be handed to President Nelson Mandela by Archbishop Tutu Thursday (Reuters photo)

Truth Commission implicates ANC, Winnie Mandela

JOHANNESBURG (AFP) — South Africa's Truth and Reconciliation Commission has warned the ruling African National Congress that it planned to blame the party for grave human rights abuses in its report to be released Thursday, SABC public radio reported Monday.

The abuses include the torture and execution of suspected traitors, the killing of civilians in bomb and landmine attacks, fermenting political violence, and killing policemen.

Furthermore, the commission indicated it had found the party should bear full responsibility for all the activities of President Nelson Mandela's former wife, Winnie Madikizela-Mandela, who has been implicated in torture, murder and abduction.

The warning came in a seven-page document sent to the party as part of the so-called Section 30 notices the TRC has served on some 200 people who may be prejudiced by the report, which President Nelson Mandela will release Thursday. TRC

spokesman John Allan confirmed.

The notices were based on the preliminary findings of the TRC into human rights abuses committed between 1961 and 1990, and gave the parties time to respond to the findings before the drafting of the report. The ANC has been at odds with the TRC for some weeks since the letter was sent to it late August and has, after failing to secure a private meeting with the truth body, objected to the findings in a written submission.

"We made our submission. We would be happy to have our submission taken into consideration," ANC spokesman Thabo Mbazo told AFP.

In the TRC document, of which AFP has a copy, the commission says the ANC and its military wing, Umkhonto we Siswe (MK), is "politically and morally accountable for the commission of gross human rights violations committed during the course of the armed struggle waged by it".

The commission

acknowledges that the ANC fought a legitimate struggle against apartheid, which it terms a crime against humanity, but points out that its leaders at times had little control over military operations, resulting in civilian loss of life. Similarly the party's failure to take action against Madikizela-Mandela resulted in more abuses being committed.

It also found that "during 1979 to 1989 torture was widely used" in ANC exile camps, and that ANC members who "had grievances and who participated in mutinies in the camps, were executed after being convicted by military tribunals".

The document lists 13 forms of torture including the so-called "Beirut" method in which victims were flogged naked while lying face down on the ground.

In another method used in the ANC's detention camps outside South Africa, victims were buried in soil to their shoulders and then beaten on their heads and hands.

Detainees were also deprived of food and medical attention and held in solitary confinement for lengthy periods without trial, the TRC found.

As a result, it said, "many persons died after punitive starvation and assault."

The ANC leadership has asked for collective amnesty for all acts committed by its members before August 1990, but the TRC further states that "the greatest number of violations were committed after the ANC had been unbanned (1990) and the armed struggle had been suspended."

The commission said the ANC was responsible for attacks and killings of political opponents, including members of the Inkatha Freedom Party and the fellow liberation Pan Africanist Congress movement, between 1990 and 1994.

The TRC's report has gone to print, the commission said Monday, and it is not clear whether its findings have been changed as a result of the ANC's submission.

Cambodia to teach painful lessons at forum on mines

PHNOM PENH (AFP) — More than 200 officials and experts from around the world met Monday in Phnom Penh for a conference on eradicating the scourge of landmines, which still kill or maim an average of five people a day in Cambodia alone.

The three-day Japanese-funded forum, run by the government's Cambodian Mine Action Centre (CMAC), aims to promote cooperation between countries plagued by mines and to share Cambodia's painful experiences.

Delegations from 29 countries are attending, many from the world's most war-torn nations such as Afghanistan, Angola, Bosnia, Croatia, Laos, Mozambique, Myanmar, Nicaragua and Somalia.

Cambodian strongman Hun Sen opened the forum urging more international aid for his mine-ravaged country to hasten the removal of unexploded ordnance (UXO) from decades of conflict.

"Cambodia would welcome any new assistance and is grateful to all friendly countries who have assisted so far," he said,

adding his government had drafted historic legislation forbidding the use or possession of landmines.

"We hope that our Cambodian assembly could proceed with its work to approve this draft as soon as possible," he said.

"Cambodia has been victimised for a long time by war."

Information Minister and CMAC chairman Ieng Mouly said millions of mines planted in Cambodia during years of war threatened the country's economic and social development as well as its reconstruction.

"Cambodia is recognised as one of the most mine-affected countries with an estimated four to six million landmines and some 40,000 amputees," he said. "They obstruct our freedom of movement. They deny land for ... resettlement, for agriculture and post-conflict reconstruction and development," he added. He said it would be decades before the mines and UXO were cleared.

The explosives are the legacy of conflict with Khmer Rouge rebels and an earlier civil war between a Hanoi-backed government

and its opponents.

The United States is also said to have dropped more than 500,000 tons of bombs on Cambodia during the Vietnam war, many of which failed to detonate.

"With the current methods, Cambodia cannot be free of landmines within the 10-year period as recommended by the Ottawa convention," the CMAC chief said.

More than 100 countries signed an international treaty banning landmines in Canada last December. The landmark convention gained backing from the tireless campaigning of the Nobel peace prize-winning U.S.-based International Campaign to Ban Landmines. The cause was also passionately supported by Britain's late Princess Diana. But despite the seemingly hopeless situation worldwide with estimates of about 25,000 people killed and maimed each year, said country director Neil Hawkins of aid agency CARE CAMBODIA, "much progress has been made so far."

"The land mine problem is one several major challenges facing many of the

rural poor in Cambodia," he added, praising CMAC's approach of linking demining to development goals such as improved infrastructure and agriculture.

According to CMAC statistics the monthly casualty toll from mines has fallen to 150 to 200 people per month in 1998, well down on the figure of between 300 and 400 estimated earlier in the decade. But there is little cause for celebration. Most of those killed or injured are poor peasant farmers, many young children, in remote border regions.

Japanese state secretary for foreign affairs Nobutaka Machimura told the conference the aim was "to share Cambodia's past experiences ... with other mine-affected countries so they can learn how to conduct demining activities based on ownership."

CMAC was originally set up under the United Nations Transitional Authority in Cambodia (UNTAC), which prepared the country for 1993 U.N.-backed elections and was later transferred to the government. The demining forum is to run through Wednesday.

Youth violence causes new strikes across France

PARIS (AP) — Transit workers were on strike in several cities Monday to protest youth attacks that have plagued public transportation across France, officials said.

The latest walkouts affected transit lines in Paris, Marseilles, Lille, Caen and Chambéry, officials said.

The Paris A line of the Regional Express, serving suburbs to the west and east including Disneyland, was severely reduced after a train driver was injured in the financial district of La Defense Sunday.

A passenger angry that he took the wrong train threw a fire extinguisher through the train's windshield, causing the driver to be hospitalized. Monday, A trains were running every 30-45 minutes instead of every 5-10 minutes, officials said.

Only one in five commuter trains were in service around

the southern port of Marseilles on the second day of a walkout, officials said. The strike began after a ticket agent was attacked on a line between Avignon and Lyon.

The workers voted to end their job action Monday afternoon.

Other attacks sparked a strike over the weekend among Marseilles bus drivers, who also began returning to work Monday.

But employee representatives said they would halt service after each attack in France's second-largest city.

Similar transit strikes continued for a sixth day in the northern city of Lille — France's fourth-largest metropolis — and for a 10th day in the Alpine city of Chambéry.

In the Normandy city of Caen, 400 bus drivers held a two-hour strike Monday morning and afternoon due

to an attack Friday. The drivers' union leaders left open the possibility of restaging the walkout Tuesday.

Union leaders demanded the immediate hiring of 15 more security guards and the installation of TV cameras on buses.

Transit workers have demanded that the government put more police on buses, subway cars and commuter trains to halt the violence. Drivers, ticket agents and passengers have been beaten and robbed, and trains and buses have been stoned, firebombed or even fired upon.

The attacks are part of a rising crime rate among youths from working class suburbs that have been hard-hit by a double-digit unemployment rate. While the national figure is 11.8 per cent, the rate can top 50 per cent in some neighbourhoods.

China detains democracy activist, dissolves group

BEIJING (R) — China detained a vocal pro-democracy activist and ordered the dissolution of his underground reform group Monday, just days after Beijing hosted its first international conference on human rights.

China Development Union (CDU) Secretary Peng Ming said officials from the Civil Affairs Bureau raided his home early Monday and confiscated fax machines, computer equipment and files on the underground organisation.

Peng and two of his associates were also taken in for questioning, he said.

"The move was completely unreasonable," Peng said in a telephone interview shortly after his release.

"The CDU is registered as a social organisation in Hong Kong and the mainland government has no authority to tell us to close," Peng's detention came just days after Beijing hailed its hosting of an international conference on human rights and a separate Europe-China dialogue on the same topic.

Delegates to both conferences had said they sensed a sincerity about rectifying human rights abuses that contrasted with China's longstanding policy of rejecting rights criticism.

"The timing was without question inappropriate," Peng said.

"It shows that the government is not serious about adhering to global rights covenants." Earlier this month, Beijing signed the International Covenant on Political and Civil Rights, a key U.N. protocol guaranteeing the rights of assembly, free speech and freedom from arbitrary arrest.

China's embattled dissident community gave a wary welcome to the signing, but worried Beijing would drag its feet on implementing the protocol.

Peng said he would push to register the group as a China-based social organisation and continue weekly meetings that address reform and modernisation in China.

"For now, I'll stop using the CDU name, and limit activities, but I hope to continue," Peng said.

'Older writers need not apply in Hollywood'

LOS ANGELES (AP) — Young, white men are the most likely to get the top film and television writing assignments in today's youth-obsessed Hollywood, according to a study released Monday by the union representing writers.

Although women and minority writers have made some gains in the last decade, the study shows that the amount of work available to them remains relatively low and the age issue has become especially acute, according to the study by the West Coast branch of the Writers Guild of America.

"We have much, much further to go," said Daniel Petrie Jr., guild president. "To the extent that the voices of minority writers and women writers and older writers are absent, we are robbing our culture of their perspectives and experiences. America has a lot of stories to be told."

The survey follows a report earlier this month that "Felicity" writer and actress Riley Weston was really 32, not 19 as she claimed. "In a business fraught with age bias, I did

what I felt I had to do to succeed," she said in a statement.

According to the survey, 73 per cent of TV and film assignments are given to writers under 30 years old.

In a profession where high unemployment is the norm even in the best of times, more than seven in 10 TV and film writers under age 30 had jobs in 1997, but less than a third of writers age 50 or older were working.

About 77 television series last season had no writers over age 50 and such prime-time shows as "Friends" and "Veronica's Closet" relied exclusively on writers under age 40, the survey said.

"While older, experienced writers were once the most highly paid in the industry, changing market dynamics since the early 1980s have made writers in their 30s the ones most highly valued by the industry," the study concluded.

The study reports that minority writers made some employment gains in the 1990s, but remain a small factor in Hollywood. Just 7 per cent of employed TV

writers and 5 per cent of feature film writers were minorities.

On a positive note for women, the gap in TV pay for writers is closing, although a chasm remains for film writers, the study said. But despite pay advances, the amount of work for women and minorities remains relatively low and growth is flat.

Last season, shows such as "The X-Files," "Frasier" and "The Pretender" had one or no female writers receiving on-screen credit, with the same true for late-night shows "Politically Correct" and "The Tonight Show." Only a handful of shows defied the trend, notably "Touched by an Angel," where more than two-thirds of the writers were women.

The report concluded that barriers are institutionalised and will be difficult to change, especially with such an emphasis on attracting young audiences, the relatively low number of women and minorities in decision-making positions, and because decisions about hiring writers are highly subjective.

Delays hit Italy's new airport

MILAN, Italy (AFP) — Travellers using Italy's controversial new Malpensa airport faced up to two-hour delays and several cancellations Monday, a day after the airport opened, officials said.

The airport — 50 kilometres outside Milan and badly serviced by road and rail links — opened Sunday and immediately ran into problems as passengers ran into delays and problems with baggage handling.

By early Monday around 15 flights had been cancelled.

Traffic using the busy access road also faced problems, made worse by a regional train strike.

As well as furious passengers, Italian airport authorities have also had to face the anger of airlines forced to switch from Milan's convenient city-centre airport.

In a move declared illegal by the European Commission, Italy said earlier this year it wanted to separate air traffic in and out of Milan by closing the city-centre airport to all

celled.

non-Italian airlines. Nine European airlines, including British Airways, Air France and Lufthansa, complained this would give an unfair advantage to Italy's state carrier Alitalia, as passengers would opt to avoid the extra travel to Malpensa.

They said they also faced extra costs in moving their operations and staff out of Milan.

The longstanding row with Brussels was finally resolved earlier this month when the European Commission approved a

plan to split European

Union air traffic between the city-centre airport and Malpensa.

The airlines took their case to an Italian tribunal asking that the date for the transfer of flights to Malpensa be delayed until better road and rail links were in place. That appeal was rejected by the court last week.

Sunday the Malpensa 2000 management company admitted there were "teething problems" at the new airport but said the worst was now over.

Hurricane Mitch lurches through west Caribbean

GEORGE TOWN, Cayman Islands (AP) — Hurricane Mitch lashed Jamaica with heavy rain and flooded parts of the Cayman Islands with huge sea swells Monday as it slowly ploughed through the western Caribbean.

The full force of Mitch's 250-kph winds did not strike Jamaica and the Caymans, but rain squalls from the huge storm flooded streets in the Jamaican capital of Kingston. Under a tropical storm warning, hotel workers in the Caymans boarded up windows and moved tourists to safer shelter.

The U.S. National Hurricane Centre in Miami issued a hurricane warning for eastern Honduras, and authorities in Mexico's Yucatan peninsula urged residents to monitor the progress of the dangerous storm, which is between a Category 4

and Category 5 hurricane.

At 7 a.m. EST, Mitch was 170 kilometres east-southeast of Honduras' Swan Islands and was moving west at 11 kph. It had swelled to nearly 480 kilometres across and U.S. forecasters said it could grow even stronger Monday.

Honduran officials declared an alert Sunday and warned that Mitch could hit the coast Monday. Officials prepared to evacuate residents and asked fishermen to keep their boats in port.

In Grand Cayman, a British colony of about 28,000, schools closed Monday, boat owners secured their vessels and residents stocked up on food, water, batteries and other essentials. A planned release of 400 endangered green sea turtle hatchlings was postponed indefinitely.

"There are guests who don't take lightly to this kind of thing," said Annette Beaumont, a clerk at Mont's Tortuga Club and Resort on Grand Cayman, where tourists were moved to upper floors. "We're turning back everyone who comes, unless they can't get a flight out."

Mitch disrupted flights, flooded streets, knocked down trees and forced church services to be cancelled Sunday in Jamaica, but no injuries were immediately reported.

"We have managed to cope with what has happened," said Barbara Carvy, head of Jamaica's disaster preparedness agency.

Sheets of rain reduced visibility to a few yards as squalls pelted Kingston and Jamaica's eastern districts. Authorities warned

of mudslides and flash floods, especially in the mountains.

At a Kingston prison, guards used tear gas to quell a brief protest by inmates upset because the storm forced authorities to close the jail, preventing relatives from bringing food.

In Negril, on Jamaica's west coast, some tourists took advantage of a choppy sea to go body surfing along the city's 11-kilometre-long beach.

"I think this is as rough as it's going to get," said O'mar Robinson, manager of the Point Ciana Beach Resort, as he pointed to waves crashing within 3 metres of a seaside bar.

The western Caribbean had been spared by Hurricane Georges, a storm that killed more than 500 during its rampage through the northeast Caribbean last month.

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Human price of conflict

IN A paper submitted to the seminar on Human Costs of Conflicts that ended in Amman yesterday, HRH Crown Prince Hassan, the Regent, painted a grim picture of the dimensions of worldwide domestic armed conflicts and urged prompt steps to deal with them. Since 1945, these conflicts have cost humanity 45 million lives and caused great damage to the economies of the inflicted countries, retarding their progress. The international community must therefore take meaningful measures if it wants to lessen the human price tag of these conflicts.

Organised by the Arab Thought Forum in cooperation with United Nations agencies and the International Committee of the Red Cross, the seminar was a timely attempt to combat the growing menace of non-international conflicts which have not only impeded progress and proliferated poverty and deprivation across the globe but also took a heavy toll on the lives of innocent people. We need a binding international code of conduct, said the Crown Prince, to deal with international conflicts and their consequences. As a matter of fact, we already have in place an International Humanitarian Order which the U.N. Independent Commission co-chaired by Prince Hassan and Prince Sadruddin Aga Khan had articulated in 1982 and that was endorsed by the U.N. General Assembly soon after. While that order is piously and rhetorically observed it is nowhere near implementation due to the reluctance of the international community to translate it into deeds. At the same time we note that Canada and Norway have embarked on yet another effort to realise a more humane world. The Canadian-Norwegian initiative needs to build on the successes or failures of the proposed New International Humanitarian Order already endorsed by the U.N. Now is a good time to merge all the efforts to humanise the world into one programme of action that is well-coordinated. Most urgent is to implement the projected code of conduct once it is adopted internationally by making it legally binding on all state parties.

ARABIC PRESS COMMENTARIES

Al Ra'i's Tareq Masarwah commented on the chilly relations between Jordan and Syria and spoke highly of Egyptian attempts to settle the differences between the two countries. Egypt has always played an influential role in mediating disputes among the Arab brothers, said Masarwah, it managed to bring Syria and Turkey to the negotiation table which led to reconciliation between the two countries. Egypt is also trying to normalise ties between Iraq and the Arab Gulf countries. The writer praised the Egyptian move which, he said, might make some progress, but ruled out any possibility that relations between Jordan and Syria will go back to normal. He said the Syrians must realise that Jordan is an independent country, and is able to make its own decisions from its own capital. The writer expressed hope that the troubled relations between the two Arab countries would soon improve.

Al Dustour in its editorial added to the pessimism surrounding the recently brokered deal between Palestinian President Yasser Arafat and the Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu. The Arab daily said this pessimism arises from past experience of Netanyahu, who always procrastinates implementing accords, even those signed personally by him. People fear, the paper said, that Netanyahu will try to delay the implementation of the accord which was reached after 19 months of deadlock in the peace process. Recent incidents by Israeli settlers attempting to hinder the signing of the long-overdue deal is enough evidence of how things could go wrong. The paper expressed hope that Israel will meet its obligations and begin troop redeployment from the West Bank according to the scheduled timetable, and that Netanyahu will stop creating excuses to avoid fulfilling his commitments.

View from the Fourth Circle

Lessons learnt from Wye

Rami G. Khouri

MATURING LATE, and acknowledging real mutual needs I see several important aspects of the Palestinian-Israeli agreement last week at Wye Plantation to move ahead with the implementation of the Oslo accord's interim measures and to start the final status talks. If the momentum of Wye is maintained and its specifics are implemented — big 'ifs' — we shall have achieved a real historic turning point in the Palestinian-Zionist and the wider Arab-Israeli conflict. The power imbalance between Palestinians and Israelis is deeply reflected in the obvious deficiencies of the Oslo process. But the shortcomings of the moment will be offset by the more positive and now reinvigorated trend towards a political settlement that views Palestinians and Israelis as equals who are entitled to the same quality of national rights at the end of the day. The historical trend towards this position during the past two decades has been consistent. (I remember all those who bitterly complained in 1993 that 'Jericho and Gaza first' was a trick, and that Jericho and Gaza were all that the Palestinians would get; the slow, steady Palestinian gains still being made should lead those who are dazed by their own despondency to snap out of their stupor, and grasp the fact that this is a continuing and ever changing process of peace-making, whose fruits are directly proportional to the political assets and skills of the negotiating parties).

The most significant aspect of the Wye meetings, in my view, was that the Israeli and Palestinian leaders for the first time in modern history looked the other side in the eye and really acknowledged the needs and rights of the other side. What had been cold and formal political negotiations until now became at Wye a process of humanised and genuine peace-making that honoured a fundamental principle: we will only get what we want if we give to the other side what it wants.

The Palestinians finally grasped the genuine significance of security for the Israelis, and stopped dealing with this as a bargaining tool. They also understood the impor-

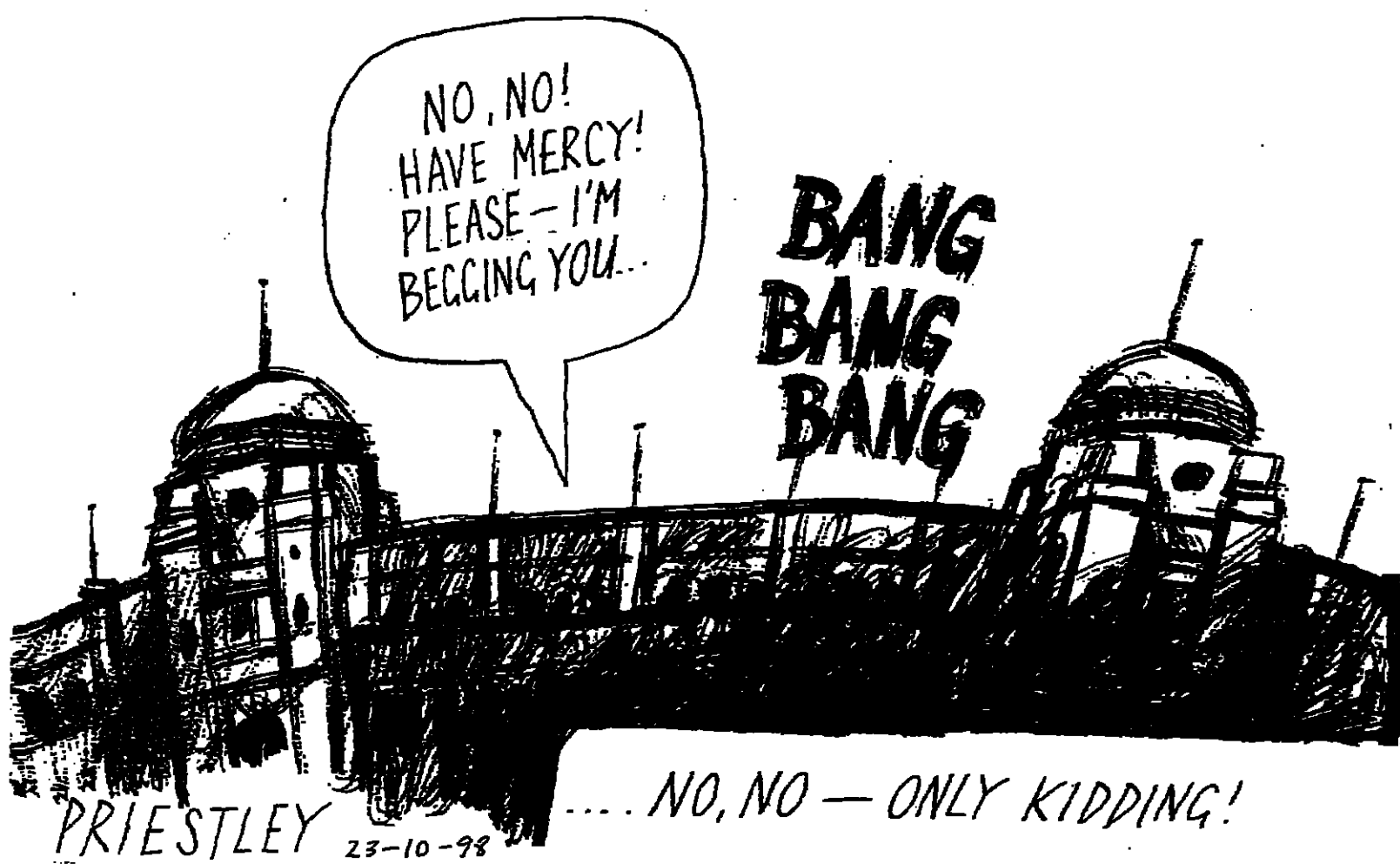
ance to Israel of changing the Palestine National Charter.

These are both top priority concerns for the Israelis — touching the most basic and legitimate Israeli concerns about their physical and political security — and the Palestinians were correct finally to grasp these Israeli needs and to respond to them in a forceful and unambiguous manner. Yasser Arafat's statement that Israeli mothers should not have to worry more if their children are late returning home from school is probably the single most powerful political statement that he has ever made to the Israeli people. He sends Israelis the critically important message that Palestinians understand the human fears and concerns of the Israeli people, and that peace can only be achieved when those concerns and rights are adequately met. Wye's significance is that it made these realisations mutual. The Israelis in turn finally understood that the Palestinians also have a right and a need to live in dignity and freedom, within a national context that maintains the integrity of Palestinian peoplehood and community and leads to Palestinian statehood. Israelis finally grasped that the Palestinians entered this Oslo process and recognised Israel because they accepted to live in peace alongside Israel in a Palestinian state — and not to suffer permanently in the interim Oslo arrangement of herding the Palestinians into disconnected urban reservations. Alongside the modest territorial gains that have been agreed to, the more important Palestinian gains at Wye were the elements that would allow Palestinians to live a more normal and dignified life — the safe passages, airport, port, prisoner releases, and other such things. These were a reciprocal Israeli sign that Israelis also finally saw the Palestinians as people who were entitled to live in security and normalcy. Many specific and basic issues remain to be negotiated, especially the central question of the Palestinian refugees. We have, though, for the first time ever, serious Palestinian-Israeli reciprocal acknowledgement of the other's validity, and a mutual qualitative leap forward in recognising the national rights

and human needs of the other. Benjamin Netanyahu has finally revealed his true nature as an expedient and pragmatic politician rather than a rigid ideologue (as I predicted he would do in a column two years ago). He has smelled and been intoxicated by that vast majority of Israelis that wants a negotiated peace and would accept a Palestinian state; and he decided that his political life was more assured inside that majority than in the hands of the weirdo Zionist lunatic right. Benjamin Netanyahu is undergoing in a period of two years the same political and psychological transformation that Yitzhak Rabin underwent in the quarter century after 1967: the realisation that Jewish and Israeli security could come only with the end of Jewish colonialism and apartheid in Palestine and the acceptance of a Palestinian state. Netanyahu is not at this point yet, but is finally moving in this direction rather than pandering to the votes of the disgruntled Israeli right. Some people mature late; but then, better late than never. The single most striking aspect of the Wye experience, I thought, was the intensity of American engagement, both during the summit and in the months before it. Historians will have to explain this to us, but for the moment it remains a powerful new element, whose good or bad dimensions we must sort out over time. The American embrace of the Palestinians as virtual equals of the Israelis was especially evident in President Clinton's remarks at the White House. Equally significant was the Jordanian role, and perhaps also the Egyptian role behind the scenes. The fact that Arab states at peace with Israel can play constructive mediating roles between Palestinians and Israelis is a noteworthy and positive new reality in this equation. This has important implications for resolving some of the tougher final status issues between Israel and Palestine.

If the momentum of the Wye summit is maintained and its decisions fully implemented — and I am certain they will be — this will prove to have been a really significant turning point in modern Middle Eastern history.

BARONESS THATCHER EXPRESSES HER OUTRAGE AS PINOCHET IS DRAGGED FROM HIS HOSPITAL BED, BEATEN, TORTURED AND THEN TAKEN TO WEMBLEY STADIUM AND SHOT....



Hollywood's Arab terrorists — part 6

By Ray Hanania

I DON'T have to see the movie "The Siege" to know that the plot relies heavily on many negative stereotypes of Arab Americans.

In "The Siege," starring Bruce Willis and Denzel Washington, acts of terrorism and rumours of impending greater horrors prompt the FBI, army and police to organise a counter-effort that includes rounding up all Arabs and Muslims in New York who might be considered potential terrorists. (Since when was an Arab ever not a potential terrorist?)

Although I am bothered by what is in the movie, I am most concerned about what is not in the movie. And what is not in "The Siege" is a prominent positive Arab American role model to counterbalance the heavy dose of negative anti-Arab hysteria prompted by the film.

I will see "The Siege," because I, like most other Americans, enjoy the excitement of a good Hollywood action/drama feature. But Hollywood's track record on this subject is poor. The vast majority of Hollywood movies now include a Middle Eastern theme based on negative stereotypes that are often founded on bigotry. This phenomenon, of course, is nothing new.

One of the earliest, was silent screen star Rudolph Valentino's 1921 portrayal as Sheikh Ahmed Ben Hassan in "The Sheikh" and his 1926 reprise in "The Son of the Sheikh." These movies typically portrayed Arabs as swarthy and somewhat sinister. But not until the 1948 Arab-Israeli war did a political agenda become apparent behind the movie plots.

In the wake of growing Middle East political tensions, a crop of films were produced. The first was "Exodus," which was based on the novel by Leon Uris and commissioned by the politically motivated publicist Edward Gottlieb to popularise Israel. And, in the process, demons Arabs.

Like most Americans, my family found Paul Newman, who starred in the big screen dramatization of the book, very handsome and very talented. But it was difficult, as Arab Americans, to enjoy a movie so filled with stereotypes, half-truths and exaggerated events.

"Exodus" was followed by "Judith" and "Cast a Giant Shadow," both espousing pro-Israeli politics at the expense of "those damn Arabs!" Throughout all of this was a horror genre that included notable films starring Boris Karloff who sometimes played an Egyptian mummy or similarly sinister Arab characters. Some of these films spun off into comedies and into a series of films based on Ali Baba's adventures, the only true positive Arab hero who happened to look more American than Arabic, fighting armies of sinister Arab villains.

In the 1970s, Hollywood's Arab villains were replaced by the Arab terrorists, exploiting international events with exaggerated scenarios. Movies like "Black Sunday" (1977) featured a plot about a crazed and disgruntled American worker (Bruce Dern) who, with Arab terrorist help, attaches a nail-filled bomb to the Good Year Blimp. His plans are to detonate it over a Super Bowl game, only to be stopped by the persistence of the Mossad agent (Robert Shaw). Those damn Arabs! This continued into the early 80s when the features more closely followed actual terrorist events. Films in the '90s returned to the plots of horrendous fantasy, offering up such memorable movies as: "The Iron Eagle" series (an 18-year-old defeats the combined armies of ruthless Middle East tyrants); the "Delta Force" series (rescuing American hostages from the clutches of Arab kidnappers); "Navy Seals" ('90); "True Lies" ('95); "Executive Decision" ('96); and "GI Jane" ('97).

So why should I think "The Siege" would be any better? And, why should I even care? It's just

entertainment, isn't it? Hollywood is not just entertainment: it lobbies the American psyche. Many Americans — who are too consumed with the challenges of their everyday life — have no time to learn the real facts about the Middle East conflict, so Hollywood movies provide a quick-spin foundation that helps them decipher daily news events.

Listen, I'll be honest. I don't have time to learn about India, but I did watch "Gandhi," starring Ben Kingsley (Krishna Bhanji, the son of an Indian doctor and British actress). I figure I know all I need to know about India and its history and conflict with neighbouring Pakistan.

So why should I expect Americans to be any different? I don't. I expect them to enjoy the excitement of the movie and absorb what little facts might be there during the typical two-hour experience in the theatre. Because of Hollywood's influence on the American mind, I do expect filmmakers to be more responsible.

"The Siege" is not responsible. Yes it does include one decent Arab character (played by Arab film actor Tony Shalhoub). Shalhoub plays a FBI agent who protests the harsh policies. But the character's horrible personal mannerisms can hardly be compared to the positive African-American role model that Washington's character offers. Washington is the conscientious senior FBI agent in charge, working under the cruel duress of an Army officer determined to protect the world against evil, played by Willis.

The point is, if you want to make a good movie better, you can be sensitive to the damage a movie like this does to Arab Americans. Why not add a positive role model character that is Arab? Why not make one of the movie heroes an Arab American?

Ray Hanania is a U.S. based journalist and author.

LETTERS

Enough of the evil caricature

To the editor:

IT WAS interesting to me that Musa Keilani referred to the "arrogance and intransigence" of Netanyahu only one day after agreement between the Palestinians and the Israelis was reached. Indeed, the atmospheres accompanying the leaders' speeches were warmer than any I can remember. Who has ever heard Netanyahu refer to the Palestinians as "his neighbours," and as "partners in peace?" Who has ever heard Arafat offer reassuring words to Israeli mothers, thus addressing the fundamental Israeli fear? Keilani's commentary shows that even moderates still think of the "other" in stereotypical terms: Israelis are always wrong; Arabs are always right (vice-versa when it's an Israeli writing the piece).

It seems that Arafat and Netanyahu have accepted the fundamental right of the "other" to exist in peace and security. I must say, I sometimes wonder if the average Arab accepts this notion. Am I a victim of my own socialisation for believing that most Arabs do not accept the legitimacy of Israel? Most of the Arab students I know in the U.S. seem to view the current "peace" only as a strategy to be pursued until Israel's destruction can be effected.

As usual, His Majesty King Hussein said it best, when he stated that "there has been enough destruction, enough death, enough waste..." Only when all people, on both sides of the border, take this sentiment truly to heart will the "other" be seen as human and not as an evil caricature. Only when this happens will true peace be possible.

Gregg 'Gershou' Snelson,
 Boston, Massachusetts,
 U.S.

The Jordan Times welcomes letters and contributions from its readers on any issue they wish to tackle. Letters intended for publication should contain the writer's full name and preferably address as well. Names can be withheld upon request but only under special circumstances. Letters are subject to editing and abridging.

Israel leaves 1999 budget intact, cuts GDP estimate

OCCUPIED JERUSALEM (R) — Israeli Treasury officials, presenting the 1999 draft budget on Monday, left intact the spending plan approved by the cabinet in September but downgraded growth projections for the economy.

The government will present next year's 215 billion shekel (\$51.3 billion) budget to parliament on Tuesday for the first of three readings. The budget must be approved by January 1.

"I hope that the budget doesn't turn into a political axe to grind," Finance Minister Yacov Neeman told a news conference.

Last week the government lost two budget battles when the legislature voted to increase salaries for senior civil servants and passed a law to offer a hefty discount to tenants in public-sector housing who want to buy their homes.

The spending package includes more money for infrastructure in a bid to give a boost to Israel's sagging economic growth.

But the budget is likely to meet opposition as the Treasury said its main policy thrust remains to cut spending and the budget deficit in relation to gross domestic product (GDP).

Neeman said keeping to the targeted reduction of the deficit to 2.0 per cent of GDP

from this year's 2.4 per cent was critical for bringing inflation lower next year.

"If, and I emphasise the word if, parliament approves the budget framework for 1999 the way it is presented here, namely the continuation of the reduction of the deficit to 2.0 per cent of GDP, we will definitely be able to meet the inflation target of four per cent," Neeman said.

Treasury officials said they had revised key parts of their economic forecast for next year downward. Most importantly they said GDP would grow a projected 2.0-2.5 per cent, down from an earlier 2.5 per cent.

"In July we were talking about (annual) inflation of three to four per cent and the shekel was half to one per cent above the strong edge of its trading band," State Revenues Commission Tzipi Galyam said, explaining the revisions.

The shekel has taken a sharp slide against the dollar since August, rekindling inflation. On Monday, the Bank of Israel responded by announcing a steep 2.0 per cent point hike in the Israeli base rates to 11.5 per cent.

"The economy that we saw was very different from the economy that we see today," Galyam said.

As late as last week Neeman said there would be no need to change growth forecasts.

Nevertheless, the budget sees tax revenues growing 2.9 per cent to 124.5 billion shekels based on 2.5 per cent GDP growth. The Treasury said it hoped stepped-up collections would add a 0.4 billion shekels to the tax take.

The budget calls for financing an anticipated 8.1 billion shekel deficit by raising 4.6 billion shekels from privatisations of state-owned enterprises, just 2.6 billion shekels from domestic borrowing and just 0.9 billion shekels from overseas borrowing.

In 1999, the Treasury said, expenditure would reach 183.3 billion shekels, 46.5 per cent of GDP, down from 47 per cent this year. The tax burden as a percentage of GDP is due to rise to 31.9 per cent from 31.4 per cent for 1998, but the Treasury said that was due to greater enforcement of tax collection rather than from higher rates.

"In 1999 there will be a half per cent decrease in expenditure in relation to the economy. I think that in light of the drop in growth that's an important achievement," Treasury Budget Director David Milgrom said.

The 1999 budget includes what the Treasury said was the first real increase in defence expenditure in 10 years. Milgrom said the package included a real increase in defence spending of 670 million shekels.

WTO mulls shift in accession strategy

GENEVA (AFP) — The World Trade Organisation (WTO), worried about the snail-paced process of accession, is mulling a serious shift in strategy to speed up new entries and cut the bulging backlog of trade officials said.

Currently, some 30 candidates, including China, Russia, Saudi Arabia and Vietnam, are waiting to join the world trade watchdog, which currently has 132 members.

China, the oldest — and weightiest — name on the waiting list, began its bid almost 12 years ago.

Diplomats say China's efforts are currently at a standstill, as Beijing focuses on pressing domestic economic matters amid financial turmoil in Asia.

Algeria is another old-timer. A working party to handle Algeria's WTO membership drive was set up in June 1987, just a few months after China's.

"There is in Brussels and Washington and in the (WTO) director general's office a notion that something must be done," said one official.

The WTO wants to find an approach which sends signals to countries negotiating entry that it is not turning its back on them, the official said.

WTO Director General Renato Ruggiero "views the accession question as one of the most important in his mandate," said WTO Director of Information Keith Rockwell.

"There is a growing body of support within the WTO for a creative and flexible approach to the question of accessions," he said.

According to trade officials, one idea in circulation is to have a super-intensive negotiation, a so-called "accessions round" in the words of one European official.

Another idea is for some sort of provisional accession status, so that countries could benefit from some of the perks, while formally remaining outside of the system.

But the second proposal raises problems, notably that WTO aspirers might lack motivation to work hard for the real thing if they enjoy some privileges.

"The director general has held a number of consultations with key members and has urged them to make every effort to accelerate the process," Rockwell said.

Thai deputy prime minister Supachai Panitchpakdi, one of four contenders vying to succeed Ruggiero when his mandate ends in April, said the cases of China and Russia in particular were "of some urgency."

Referring to Beijing's 12-year saga, he said in Geneva last week: "It's been too long and we must address this issue seriously to find a way out."

Not one country has actually joined the world trade watchdog this year though in early October members approved the succession of Latvia and Kirghizstan, who must now ratify their protocols domestically to be confirmed as members.

In 1997 four countries — Congo, the Democratic Republic of Congo (the former Zaire), Panama and Mongolia were admitted.

Joining is a painstaking process, involving the applicant setting out clear commitments to open markets in trade in goods and services — a highly technical job.

The process culminates in a consensual approval of a newcomer's "protocol of accession." The WTO, mindful of the needs of poor countries, offers technical help.

There is an added urgency to bring waiting countries on board as soon as possible.

The WTO faces the prospect of a new millennium negotiating round that could sap much of its time, energy and expertise while requiring further market opening concessions from those hoping to join.

But most pundits dismiss any chance of China, the world's 10th largest trading power, coming in before 2000.

U.S. Trade Representative Charlene Barshefsky said recently in Brussels that China's accessions negotiations have been "very, very slow."

"Slower than we, and I think slower than the Europeans would like to see," Washington has fought China's desire to enter the WTO on developing country terms, while Beijing has accused the U.S. administration of constantly changing the admission goal posts.

For the moment, China's WTO bid is on the back-burner while it grapples with domestic reforms and slowing exports, trade officials said.

REUTERS • REUTERS • The Business of Information

| Major Currencies & Cross Rates | | | | | | | | | |
|--------------------------------|--------|--------|--------|---------|---------|--------|---------|---------|--------|
| Currency | USD | DEM | GBP | CHF | JPY | CAD | ITL | NLG | FRF |
| US Dollar | - | 1.6457 | 0.5930 | 1.3440 | 118.66 | 1.5460 | 1626.40 | 1.8546 | 5.5133 |
| DE Mark | 0.6076 | - | 0.3601 | 0.8164 | 72.16 | 0.9382 | 988.69 | 1.1278 | 3.3521 |
| GB Sterling | 1.6882 | 2.7781 | - | 2.2675 | 200.14 | 2.6069 | 2746.83 | 3.1322 | 9.3114 |
| CH Franc | 0.7440 | 1.2239 | 0.4404 | - | 88.34 | 1.1901 | 1210.48 | 138.03 | 4.1034 |
| JP Yen | 0.0084 | 1.3856 | 0.4992 | 1.1311 | - | 1.3017 | 13.71 | 156.24 | 4.6457 |
| CA Dollar | 0.6468 | 1.0485 | 0.3799 | 0.8519 | 1.30 | - | 1037.76 | 1.1828 | 3.5160 |
| IT Lira | 0.0006 | 1.0107 | 0.3641 | 0.8025 | 1373.25 | 0.9495 | - | 11.40 | 3.3887 |
| NL Guilder | 0.5392 | 88.62 | 0.3194 | 72.41 | 63.92 | 0.8328 | 876.88 | - | 2.9724 |
| FR Franc | 0.1814 | 0.2982 | 0.1075 | 24.3500 | 21.49 | 0.2801 | 33.63 | 33.6300 | - |

| Middle Eastern Currencies | | | | | | | | | |
|---------------------------|--------|--------|---------|--------|--------|--------|--------|---------|--------|
| Currency | USD | JOD | SAR | BAH | QAT | KUW | AED | LBP | EGP |
| US Dollar | - | 0.7090 | 3.7504 | 0.3770 | 3.6402 | 0.3016 | 3.6728 | 1502.00 | 3.4050 |
| Jordan Dinar | 1.4104 | - | 5.2897 | 0.5317 | 5.1343 | 0.4254 | 5.1803 | 2118.48 | 4.8025 |
| Saudi Riyal | 0.2666 | 0.1990 | - | 0.1005 | 0.97 | 0.0804 | 0.98 | 400.49 | 0.9079 |
| Bahrain Dinar | 2.65 | 1.8807 | 9.9485 | - | 9.66 | 0.8000 | 9.74 | 3984.30 | 9.0323 |
| Qatar Dinar | 0.2747 | 0.1948 | 1.0303 | 1.0303 | - | 0.0829 | 1.01 | 412.61 | 0.9354 |
| Kuwait Dinar | 3.3156 | 2.3508 | 12.4350 | 1.2499 | 12.07 | - | 12.18 | 4980.11 | 0.9354 |
| Emirates Dinar | 0.2723 | 0.1930 | 1.0211 | 1.0211 | 0.0911 | 0.0821 | - | 408.95 | 0.9271 |
| Lebanese/1000 | 0.87 | 0.4720 | 2.4969 | 0.2510 | 2.4236 | 0.2008 | 2.4453 | - | 2.2670 |
| Egyptian | 0.2837 | 0.2082 | 1.1014 | 0.1107 | 1.0651 | 0.0886 | 1.0786 | 441.12 | - |

| Energy | | |
|----------|--------|----------|
| Oil | Last | Previous |
| Brent | 0.00 | 0.00 |
| W. Texas | 14.33 | 14.02 |
| Bonny | 0.00 | 0.00 |
| Dubai | 12.74 | 12.48 |
| UL Gas | 138.00 | 138.00 |

| Mid-East Currencies | | | | |
|---------------------|--------|---------|---------|---------|
| Currency | USD | DEM | GBP | JPY |
| SA Riyal | 0.2666 | 0.4389 | 0.15919 | 0.3585 |
| AE Dirham | 0.2723 | 0.44817 | 0.16153 | 0.35807 |
| KW Dinar | 3.3156 | 5.46582 | 1.96696 | 4.45831 |
| BH Dinar | 0.3770 | 4.36681 | 1.57381 | 3.56533 |
| CY Pound | 2.0489 | 3.3683 | 1.2131 | 2.7491 |

| Metal Prices | | |
|-----------------|-------|-------|
| Metal | Bid | Offer |
| Gold (oz's) | 291.4 | 291.9 |
| Silver (oz's) | 4.86 | 4.89 |
| Platinum (oz's) | 337.5 | 339.5 |
| AL (3 Months) | 1282 | 1295 |
| CU (3 Months) | 1586 | 1590 |
| Zinc (3 Months) | 947 | 949 |
| Lead (3 Months) | 497 | 499 |
| NI (3 Months) | 3955 | 3970 |

| Currency Deposit Rates (Bid) | | | | |
|------------------------------|--------|--------|--------|--------|
| Period | -1- | -3- | -6- | -1- |
| Cncy | Month | Months | Months | Year |
| USD | 5.2198 | 5.2192 | 4.9585 | 4.7881 |
| GBP | 7.4103 | 7.1705 | 6.9272 | 6.6619 |
| JPY | 0.3433 | 0.3977 | 0.4406 | 0.4784 |
| DEM | 3.6000 | 3.5684 | 3.5372 | 3.4975 |
| FRF | 3.5000 | 1.3116 | 1.3545 | 1.4441 |
| CHF | 1.1225 | 3.5684 | 3.5313 | 3.5000 |
| ITL | 4.7010 | 4.3680 | 3.9560 | - |

| Main Equity Indices | | | | | | |
|---------------------|------------|----------|---------|--------|---------|---------|
| Bourse | Index | Value | Chng | % Chng | High | Low |
| New York | DOW JONES | 8418.82 | -33.47 | -0.4 | 8477.78 | 8408.01 |
| New York | S&P 500 | 1068.8 | -1.87 | -0.17 | 1074.42 | 1068.17 |
| London | FT-SE 100 | 5248.2 | 31.1 | 0.6 | 5329 | 5215.2 |
| Tokyo | NIKKEI 225 | 13843.48 | -301.24 | -2.13 | 14054.9 | 13806.4 |
| Paris | CAC 40 | 3441.77 | 48.01 | 1.41 | 3467.3 | 3423.06 |
| Frankfurt | DAX | 4577.74 | 128.85 | 2.85 | 4615.83 | 4458.62 |

| Energy | | |
|-----------------|--------|----------|
| Commodity | Last | Delivery |
| Coffee (c/lbs) | 107.33 | Spot |
| Cocoa (\$/ton) | 1950 | Spot |
| Sugar (\$/ton) | 226.5 | Spot |
| Wheat (\$/ton) | 121 | Spot |
| Soy (c/lbs) | 25.14 | Spot |
| Tea (stg/kg) | 125 | Spot |
| Barley (\$/bsh) | 0 | Spot |
| Rice (\$/ton) | 395 | Spot |

| * JOD Cross Rates | | | |
|-------------------|--------|--------|--|
| Currency | Buy | Sell | |
| US Dollar | 0.708 | 0.719 | |
| GB Sterling | 1.1887 | 1.1946 | |
| DE Mark | 0.4296 | 0.4316 | |
| CH Franc | 0.5265 | 0.5281 | |
| FR Franc | 0.1281 | 0.1287 | |
| JP Yen | 0.5943 | 0.5973 | |
| NL Guilder | 0.3807 | 0.3825 | |
| IT Lira | 0.434 | 0.4362 | |

* Source: Central Bank of Jordan.

Gulf banks told to cut risks, consider mergers

DOHA (R) — Banks in Gulf Arab states should reduce exposure to risky products and consider mergers to cope with an economic downturn caused by slumping oil prices, senior banking officials said.

But central bank chiefs and other leading bankers told a Doha conference, which ended on Sunday, that the region would not face the same turmoil that has hit regions like Asia.

"Though imminently I do not see a danger to our financial institutions nor a reason to fear what is happening in other parts of the world, the decrease in oil prices has affected expenditure and restricted financial movements," Saudi Arabian Monetary Agency (SAMA) Governor Hamad Saud Al-Sayyan said.

He said the Gulf economic climate remained good and banks had performed well. Gulf currencies were also stable, he said, with the excep-

tion of the Saudi riyal.

But the central banker said the drop in oil prices posed a "major challenge."

Spending plans of Gulf Arab states, which rely on oil exports for about 75 per cent of their income, have been derided due to a 30 per cent slump in oil prices this year.

The oil price fall was partly blamed for putting pressure on the Saudi riyal in August, although SAMA fended off speculators.

Most currencies of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) — an alliance that comprises Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates — are linked to the dollar.

"GCC economies are still in good shape compared to other countries and regions," Bahrain Monetary Agency Governor Abdullah Saif said.

Gulf Arab states, shy about foreign investment, have escaped the kind of crisis expe-

rienced in Asia where frightened investors have withdrawn their funds.

But officials said the more austere climate encourages caution. "The slump in oil prices has affected the economies of the GCC states and on a personal level I feel banks and financial institutions should be cautious," said UAE Central Bank Governor Sultan Ben Nasser Suweidi.

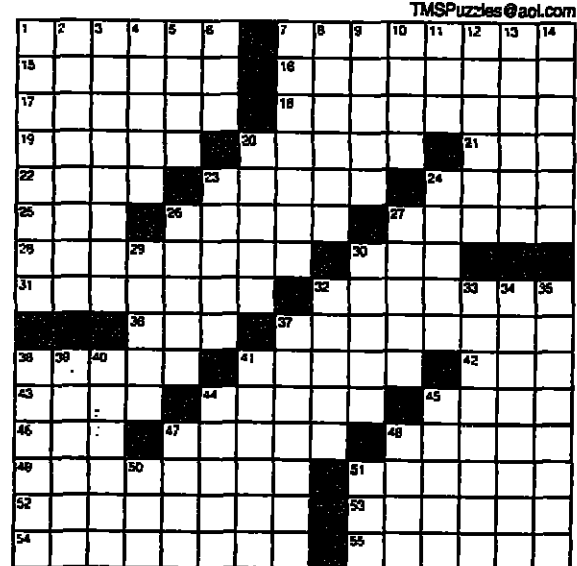
"Banks should advise their clients not to invest in high-risk ventures or capacity expansion especially at this stage," he added.

Ghazi Abdul-Jawad, president of regional giant Arab Banking Corp. said banks had an increasingly demanding role to play. They needed to raise \$40 billion-\$60 billion over the next 10 years for project finance, he said.

"If any bank wishes to raise deposits it can be achieved only through mergers," he said.

THE Daily Crossword Edited by Wayne Robert Williams

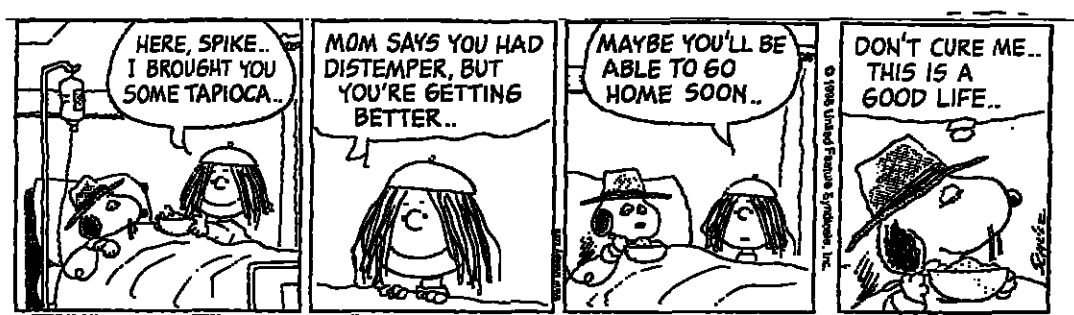
- ACROSS**
- 1 Petulant
 - 7 Vehement denunciation
 - 15 Enticement
 - 16 Acted maternally
 - 17 Andes herd
 - 18 To the ends of the Earth
 - 19 Olympic sleds
 - 20 Saint James or Sarandon
 - 21 Caspian
 - 22 Small snakes
 - 23 Parts of shoes
 - 24 Ship's tiller
 - 25 de la Plata
 - 26 Mystery pointers
 - 27 "The Bells of St."
 - 28 Marino's team
 - 30 Luau fare
 - 31 Assumed a scornful expression
 - 32 Straw hats
 - 36 Atmosphere
 - 37 Annual celebration
 - 38 Stein civil-rights leader
 - 41 Cosecants' reciprocals
 - 42 Ms. Gardner
 - 43 Moral misjudgments
 - 44 Ditties
 - 45 Singer Campbell
 - 46 Hot quaff
 - 47 Scholarly books
 - 48 Might
 - 49 Captivates
 - 51 Mental confidence
 - 52 Being
 - 53 Team makeup
 - 54 Wanton slaughter
 - 55 Knights' charges
- DOWN**
- 1 Green-headed ducks
 - 2 Trick of the eye
 - 3 Colors' staff
 - 4 Irritating smoke
 - 5 Periods
 - 6 Some: Fr.
 - 7 Small vials
 - 8 Ropes for rustlers
 - 9 Mythical strongman
 - 10 Subsequently
 - 11 Do axe work
 - 12 Graphite remover
 - 13 Only just
 - 14 Macabre cartoonist
 - 15 Audible waves
 - 16 Crafter
 - 17 Cuba neighbor
 - 18 Rock or Schenkel
 - 19 Castles' defenses
 - 20 Boses and Bartlett's
 - 21 Stanzas
 - 22 Elaine's last name
 - 23 "Sainted"
 - 24 Determine
 - 25 significance
 - 26 Separated, as threads
 - 27 Maligns
 - 28 Subtlety
 - 29 Regard
 - 30 Capital on the Danube
 - 31 Makes into law
 - 32 Fort near Charleston
 - 33 Quinine water
 - 34 Prickly
 - 35 Highland plant
 - 36 Casual farewell
 - 37 Old codger
 - 38 That guy's
 - 39 Fern. address



By Tom Puce Chicago, IL

| | | |
|---------|------------|-------|
| SCOT | BRUT | SLEPT |
| ARAB | EONS | TOTEM |
| BETA | ALGA | ROUSE |
| ODER | TFORMATION | |
| TONSIL | DSOS | |
| KNEEL | TSTRAP | |
| TRAIT | EYRE | BALE |
| OURTOWN | ALLOVER | |
| STLO | ODOR | ANISE |
| SHOWER | CAUSE | |
| LSAT | DESIST | |
| MODEL | TFORD | TREE |
| AGAVE | OBOE | EVAN |
| LEVER | REAR | AILS |
| TEENY | ERNS | KNEE |

Peanuts



Andy Capp



Mutt'n'Jeff



THE BETTER HALF By Glasbergen



"We switched to decaf at work. As soon as the boss falls asleep, we all go home."

JUMBLE THAT SCRAMBLED WORD GAME by Henri Arnold and Mike Arghion

Unscramble these four Jumbles, one letter to each square, to form four ordinary words.

WAHSS

DENUC

SCETOK

HALTEL

Everyone get in on the fun! What the school nurse did during the flu outbreak.

Now arrange the circled letters to form the surprise answer, as suggested by the above cartoon.

Answer: THE

(Answers tomorrow)

Yesterday's Jumbles: ENEMY ERASE (ISLAND) SUBMIT
Answer: A poor way to buy real estate — SITE UNSEEN

Broncos and Vikings remain unbeaten

DENVER (AFP) — Terrell Davis rose even higher in the ranks of the running back elite and Jason Elam wrote his name in the record books Sunday as Super Bowl champion Denver remained undefeated in the National Football League.

Davis became just the third running back in NFL history to rush for 1,000 yards in the first seven games of a season. Elam matched Tom Dempsey's NFL record with a 63-yard field goal as the Broncos defeated the Jacksonville Jaguars 37-24 in a battle of AFC division leaders.

In Detroit, the Minnesota Vikings remained the NFC's lone unbeaten team, outscoring the Detroit Lions 24-0 in the second half en route to a 34-13 victory.

Both teams took their records to 7-0. The Broncos' offense continued its season-long roll while the defense sacked Jaguars quarterback Mark Brunell seven times. Davis rushed for 136 yards and three touchdowns and caught five passes for 76 yards.

Davis joined Hall of Famers O.J. Simpson and Jim Brown as the only players ever to record 1,000 yards in the first seven games of the season. Davis reached the milestone just prior to the two-minute warning in second half, breaking up the middle for a four-yard gain.

Last year's Super Bowl Most Valuable Player, who rushed for 184 yards and two touchdowns in a playoff victory over the Jaguars last season, became the first running back to crack the 100-yard rushing barrier against Jacksonville in 18 regular-season games — the longest current streak in the NFL.

Elam also put his name in the record book. With the Broncos ahead 24-10, Elam lined up his attempt on the final play of the half. Despite a slight slip as he kicked the ball, Elam split the uprights about five feet above the crossbar.

It was Denver's 20th straight win at home. Counting last year's playoff run, Denver has won 12 straight overall.

The Vikings continued their best start since 1975, when they won their first 10 games, and kept a stranglehold on the NFC's best record.

They are one game better than the San Francisco 49ers, who recorded their 16th straight victory over the Rams, 28-10, at St. Louis.

The Green Bay Packers, who broke a two-game losing streak with a 28-10 victory over the Baltimore Ravens, are a further game back.

"We don't think about it too much," Vikings veteran receiver Cris Carter said of their unblemished record. "Every game is another obstacle. We don't sit around and talk about it."

Detroit led 13-10 at halftime, but Gary Anderson kicked his 400th career field goal, Randall Cunningham threw a 10-yard touchdown pass to Carter and Robert Smith sprinted 57 yards for another score in a 17-point third quarter.

Cunningham completed 17-of-30 passes for 190 yards, two TDs and two interceptions, winning the battle of surprising quarterbacks over Lions rookie Charlie Batch. Cunningham, a 13-year veteran who took over for injured starter Brad Johnson in Week Two, has 14 touchdowns and two interceptions in guiding the Vikings to six wins.

In Miami, Dan Marino orchestrated the 34th game-winning drive of his career, piloting the Dolphins to a 12-9 overtime victory over New England.

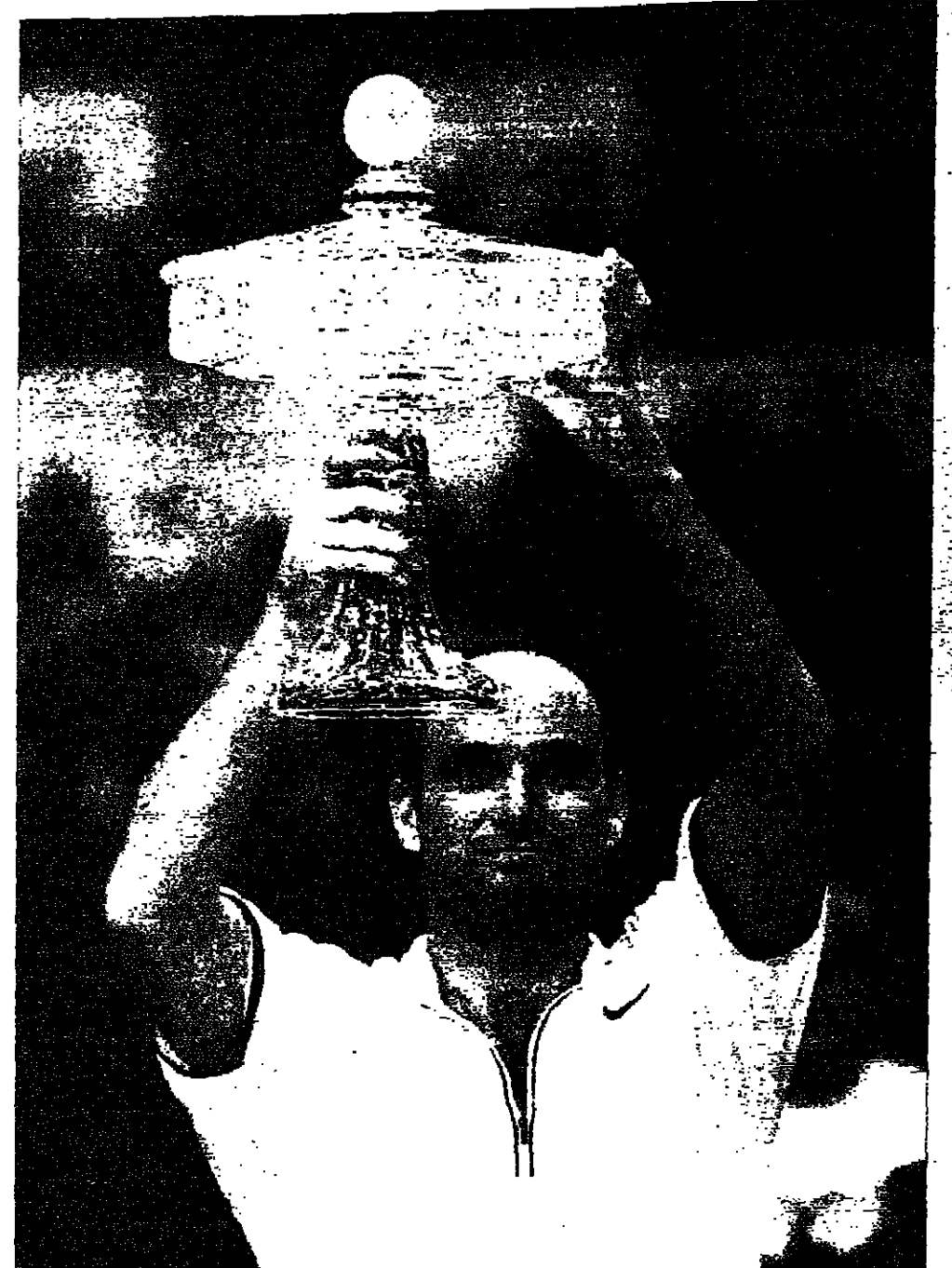
And Doug Flutie celebrated his 36th birthday two days late by throwing for a career-high 282 yards and two touchdowns to lead the Buffalo Bills to a 30-14 victory over winless Carolina.

In other games, New Orleans defeated Tampa Bay 9-3 in a matchup of the NFC's two worst offenses. The New York Jets beat Atlanta 28-3, Chicago edged Tennessee 23-20, Oakland beat Cincinnati 27-10, and Seattle beat San Diego 27-20.

Agassi 5th in latest ATP rankings

PARIS (AFP) — ATP rankings released on Monday:

| | |
|-------------------------------|---------|
| 1. Pete Sampras (USA) | 4344pts |
| 2. Marcelo Rios (Chi) | 3651 |
| 3. Patrick Rafter (Aus) | 3489 |
| 4. Carlos Moya (Spa) | 2959 |
| 5. Andre Agassi (USA) | 2867 |
| 6. Alex Corretja (Spa) | 2832 |
| 7. Karol Kucera (Svk) | 2620 |
| 8. Yevgeni Kafelnikov (Rus) | 2463 |
| 9. Tim Henman (Gbr) | 2452 |
| 10. Petr Korda (Cze) | 2327 |
| 11. Richard Krajicek (Ned) | 2124 |
| 12. Jonas Bjorkman (Swe) | 1970 |
| 13. Greg Rusedski (Gbr) | 1886 |
| 14. Goran Ivanisevic (Cro) | 1877 |
| 15. Jan Siemerink (Ned) | 1837 |
| 16. Albert Costa (Spa) | 1823 |
| 17. Cedric Pioline (Fra) | 1736 |
| 18. Thomas Enqvist (Swe) | 1698 |
| 19. Mark Philippoussis (Aus) | 1610 |
| 20. Felix Mantilla (Spa) | 1593 |
| 21. Thomas Johansson (Swe) | 1572 |
| 22. Alberto Berasategui (Spa) | 1537 |
| 23. Gustavo Kuerten (Bra) | 1479 |
| 24. Thomas Muster (Aut) | 1454 |
| 25. Michael Chang (USA) | 1302 |
| 26. Wayne Ferreira (Rsa) | 1279 |
| 27. Byron Black (Zim) | 1254 |
| 28. Todd Martin (USA) | 1242 |
| 29. Francisco Claver (Spa) | 1150 |
| 30. Nicolas Escude (Fra) | 1117 |



Andre Agassi of the United States holds the crystal cup after his victory at the Czech Indoor Tennis Tournament. The World No. 6 Agassi defeated Slovakia's Jan Krosak in 6-2, 3-6 and 6-3 in the final and pocketed \$137,000 of prize money (AFP photo)

McEnroe sees prettier picture in women's game

MELBOURNE (AFP) — Men's tennis faces a major challenge to try to stay ahead of the women's game in popularity, according to triple Wimbledon champion John McEnroe.

The men's game is in danger of losing more fans as the women attract increasing interest, he said Sunday after winning the Champions senior tournament at Melbourne Park where he defeated South African-born Johan Kriek 7-5, 6-3 for his second title in succession.

"There is more interest in the personalities and rivalries in a sense with the women and you've got to give them credit for that," McEnroe said.

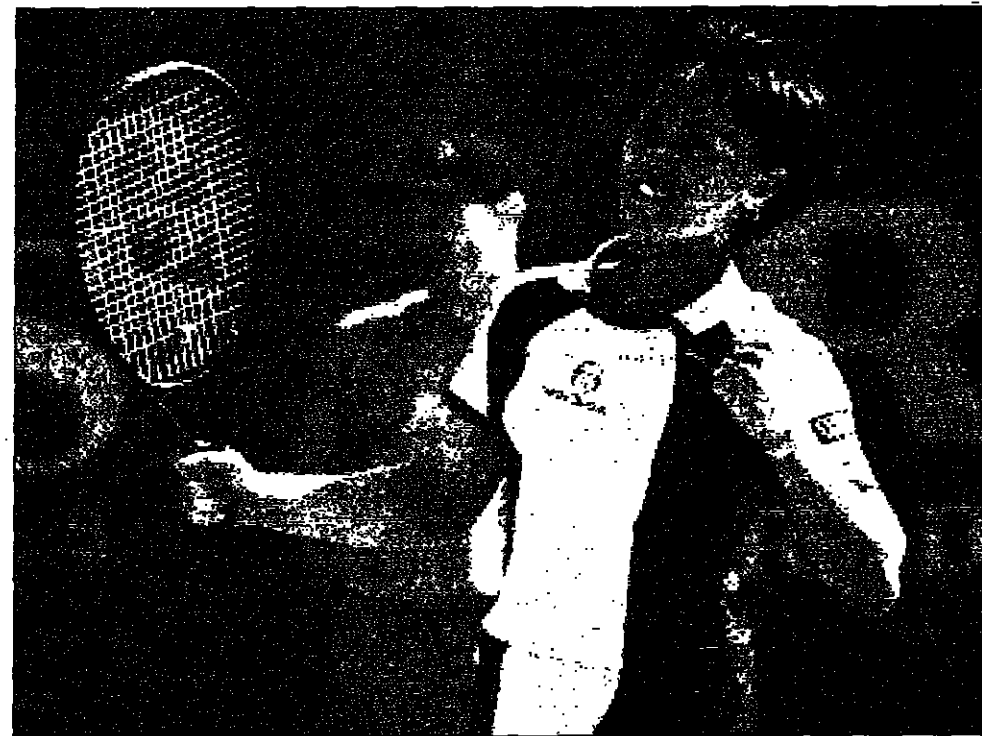
"You have the Williams sisters, who are cocky, Martina Hingis, Steffi Graf trying to come back and, of course, Anna Kournikova."

"They are at least going out there and laying it on the line and saying, 'I'm the best.'"

"There are more stories there and the guys are going to have to get it together. I'd look at it as a challenge."

The 39-year-old American maintains he still wants to play Davis Cup doubles for the USA and perhaps doubles at the 2000 Sydney Olympics.

He said U.S. Davis Cup captain Tom Gullikson knows of his offer but added: "It's clear he has another agenda."



World No. 1 Martina Hingis



Foremr No. 1 Steffi Graf

Ravanelli before drugs judge

TURIN (AFP) — Olympique Marseille striker Fabrizio Ravanelli was questioned by a judge here on Monday as part of a continuing inquiry into doping in Italian soccer.

Ravanelli is the latest in a long list of current and former Juventus players interviewed by State Prosecutor Raffaele Guariniello as part of his investigation into substances given to footballers here.

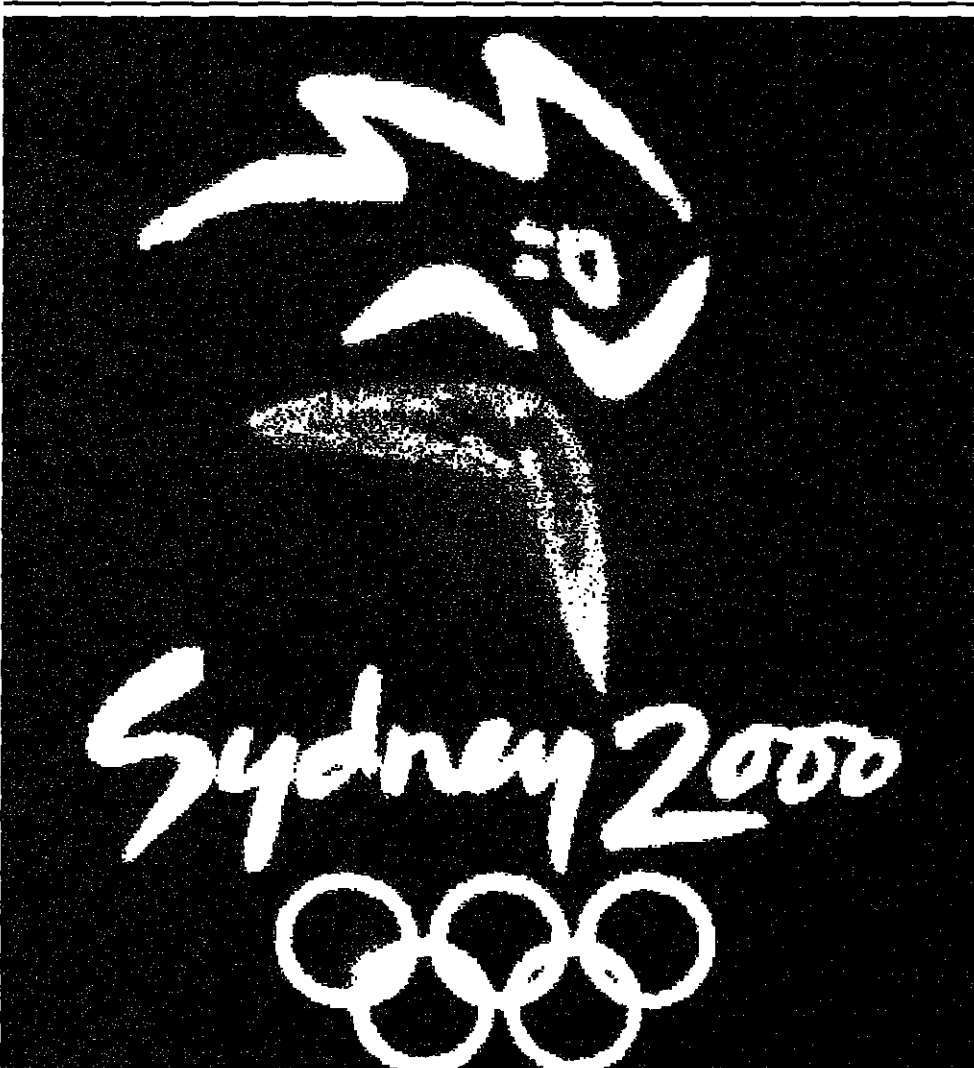
Ravanelli played for Juventus from 1992 to 1996 before joining Middlesbrough in the English Premiership after winning the European Cup.

Guariniello is particularly interested in the effects of creatine, the naturally-occurring amino acid which can be legally taken by athletes in concentrated form to improve muscle performance.

The Marseille striker told the judge he had taken between 6-8 grammes of creatine a day but had stopped when he realised that he had put on an extra two kilos in weight in three weeks, ANSA news agency said.

Ravanelli, whose experience with creatine was identical to that of former Juventus and Crystal Palace striker Michele Padovano, said he had not taken it since leaving Italy.

Guariniello opened his inquiry last August after insinuations by AS Roma coach Zdenek Zeman that current and former Juventus idols Alessandro Del Piero and Gianluca Vialli had used drugs to build up their muscles.



Sydney Games to copy Wimbledon tennis court

SYDNEY (AFP) — Sydney Olympic planners are trying to recreate the Wimbledon feel for their own tennis tournament.

The centre court for the 2000 Olympics has been modelled on the new number one court at Wimbledon, Olympic Co-Ordination Authority (OCA) Director Mike Grealy said Monday.

"But it won't be grass," he added.

The OCA, the body responsible for Olympic venue construction, hopes

to start work on the A\$32 million (\$19 million) 16-court venue at Homebush Bay by the end of the year. Its first tournament — the World Youth Cup — will be held next September.

Richard Rees, who helped design Wimbledon's number one court, was also involved in the design of the Olympic Stadium court which will seat 11,000 and cost A\$25 million (\$15 million). Eighty per cent of fans will be under cover.

State-of-the-art air conditioning — through tunnel

vents across the Rebound Ace surface — will keep players cool in case of severe heat, as sometimes hits Melbourne for the Australian Open.

Former triple Wimbledon champion John Newcombe, a consultant with the Sydney Organising Committee for the Olympics, said fans would be closer than at any court in Australia.

"The Olympic Games stadium will build its own tradition," he said.

| TODAY AT | PHILADELPHIA '1' | PHILADELPHIA '2' | PLAZA | CONCORD | GALLERIA 1 | GALLERIA 2 | Hisbaw Yanes Theatre |
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| | TEL: 5934793 | TEL: 5934793 | TEL: 5934793 | TEL: 5934793 | TEL: 5934793 | TEL: 5934793 | TEL: 462155 |
| | Nathan Lane & Lee Evans .. in MOUSE HUNT Shows: 12:30, 3:30, 6:15, 8:30, 10:30 | George Clooney & Nicole Kidman .. in THE PEACE MAKER Shows: 12:30, 3:30, 6:15, 8:30, 10:30 | Comedian Mohammad Huneidi .. in SAEEDI AT THE AMERICAN UNIVERSITY Shows: 12:30, 3:30, 6:30, 8:30, 10:30 | CONCORD "1" Michael Douglas & Sean Penn .. in THE GAME Shows: 12:30, 3:30, 6:00, 8:15, 10:30 CONCORD "2" Robert Redford .. in UP CLOSE & PERSONAL Shows: 3:30, 5:30 only | ABDOUN www.cns.com.jo/Galleria Comedian Mohammad Huneidi .. in SAEEDI AT THE AMERICAN UNIVERSITY Shows: 3:30, 6:30, 8:30, 10:30 | ABDOUN www.cns.com.jo/Galleria Comedian Mohammad Huneidi .. in SAEEDI AT THE AMERICAN UNIVERSITY Shows: 3:30, 6:15, 8:15, 10:30 | Watch out for the new play |

Listings for films and times as recieved by cinemas and their advertising agencies.



Juventus's Frenchman Zinedine Zidane (L) vies with Inter Milan's French Benoit Caillaud in an Italian Serie A match in Turin (AFP photo)

Real and Juve playing catch-up

PARIS (AFP) — European champions Real Madrid and Juventus, the side they beat in last May's Champions Cup final, both have to play catch-up in their domestic leagues as they chase pacesetters Mallorca and Fiorentina following this weekend's action.

Italian Champions Juventus had World Cup star Zinedine Zidane and Dutchman Edgar Davids sent off but still beat rivals Inter Milan 1-0 in a controversial Serie A clash in Turin on Sunday.

Alessandro Del Piero netting a late winner on the rebound from a missed penalty.

But Fiorentina still lead the way with a two-point advantage after pouncing Salernitana 4-0. Brazilian striker Edmundo their star man with two goals. Deadly Argentinian striker partner Gabriel Batistuta likewise hit a brace.

AC Milan are third after just edging Roma 3-2 in a thriller thanks to George Weah's winner. But neighbours Inter face a tough period of self-examination as Sunday's loss at Juve followed a 5-3 home defeat to Lazio and dropped them to sixth.

Racing Santander thwarted Real Madrid's hopes of moving back to the top in Spain by holding their illustrious opponents to a 2-2 draw at the Bernabeu stadium.

An injury-time equaliser by Pedro Muniz Alvarez gave Santander, who earlier led, an unexpected point and allowed Mallorca to edge a point clear after the Canary islanders swamped Atletico Madrid 4-0.

Mallorca, whose goals came from Yugoslav Veljko Paunovic in the first half and Bisan Lauren, a Jovan Stankovic penalty and Francisco Soler in the second, now lead with 15 points from their seven matches.

Real have 14, one ahead of both Celta

Vigo, 2-0 winners Saturday over Zaragoza, and Barcelona, who won their local derby at Espanyol 2-1.

Bayern Munich are looking unassailable in the German Bundesliga after crushing reigning champions Kaiserslautern 4-0 on Saturday at a sold-out Olympic stadium.

Brazilian striker Giovane Elber was the star with goals in the 52nd and 56th minutes.

EUROPEAN SOCCER

while he also set up the other two for Mario Basler and Iranian international Ali Daei.

The Bavarians' victory made up for last season when they lost out to Lautern in the title race — and also lost both their games to Otto Rehhagel's men.

Defeat dropped Kaiserslautern three places to 10th and they are not expecting a recovery until they get injured stars Olaf Marschall, Ratinho, Michael Schjoberg, Martin Wagner and Andreas Buck back from injury.

Bayern now lead the table with 25 points, five ahead of city rivals 1860 Munich, who drew 1-1 against Leverkusen on Sunday.

Bayer Leverkusen controlled the game and went ahead after seven minutes when German international Ulf Kirsten converted a penalty, awarded for handball.

Harald Cerny set up Bernd Hobsch for a late equaliser to rescue a point.

The race for the French title is a clear two-horse race with Bordeaux getting their noses back in front Sunday after two goals from Lilian Laslandes saw off promoted Nancy 2-0.

Marseille had briefly taken over as leaders after crushing struggling

Sochaux 4-0 at the Stade Velodrome on Saturday with two goals each for Italian striker Fabrizio Ravanelli and Titi Camara.

But Laslandes ensured that the joy of the 1993 European Cup champions was short-lived by heading Bordeaux into a 26th-minute lead and then driving home a right-foot shot for the second goal right at the death to restore a one-point lead after ten

matches.

It was Bordeaux's sixth straight home win at their Parc Lescure.

In Sunday's other game, reigning champions Lens slumped 1-0 at Montpellier, Maouilda scoring in the 57th minute to leave Lens struggling in 11th place after just three wins.

Metz bagged their first win of the campaign, beating Monaco 1-0 with a first-half Bruno Rodriguez penalty.

That allowed Rennes to leapfrog Monaco by defeating Lorient 1-0. Burundi striker Shabani Nonda on target in the first half. Auxerre beat Lyon 1-0 to climb to fourth with Steve Marlet scoring.

Paris Saint Germain, who had Francis Llacer sent off for a second yellow card, are still stuck in mid-table despite hiring Portuguese coach Artur Jorge after a goalless draw in Nantes.

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Hong Kong champion jockey to ride in Melbourne Cup

MELBOURNE (AFP) — Hong Kong's top jockey Basil Marcus has been booked for his first ride on The Hind in next week's A\$2.8 million (\$1.68 million) Melbourne Cup.

The South African rider, stable jockey for David Hayes, will team with the Adelaide Cup winner prepared by Hayes' elder brother Peter.

Peter Hayes was going to miss the Melbourne Cup after four-year-old The Hind failed in the Caulfield Cup two weeks ago, but he revised his plans after strong gallops.

The 3,200 metre (two-mile) Melbourne Cup next Tuesday at Flemington will be the biggest international ride for Marcus who has been six-times Hong Kong's leading jockey.

"I didn't know what I would be finding with him after his Caulfield Cup run," Hayes said. "But as the week has gone, I've been more and more impressed with him."

"He has done extra well and yesterday in his most serious gallop since the Caulfield Cup his work was excellent without making time."

"I'm quite confident the horse is fine and that his Caulfield Cup run was an aberration."

"I'm optimistic that he is on line for the Melbourne Cup."

Highly-rated New Zealand stayer Chatham has recovered from an injured foreleg and will make a last ditch bid to qualify for the Melbourne Cup.

The six-year-old pulled up save after powering home for a luckless eighth in last Wednesday's Geelong Cup.

But according to trainer Sue Walsh he is back on track for the cup.

Walsh said race jockey Noel Harris, who returned to New Zealand after riding Chatham in the Geelong Cup, would again partner the horse in the 2,500-metre SAAB Quality at Flemington on Saturday when he must finish in the first two to qualify for the Melbourne Cup.

"He's still on track," Walsh said.

Chatham, renowned for his big finishes, has won nine of 19 starts and is 33-1 in early betting for the Melbourne Cup.

English entry Faithful Son, from Sheikh Mohammed Al Maktoum's Godolphin stables, is the early favourite at 5-1.

Coulthard backing Hakkinen for Formula 1 world title

MILAN (AFP) — David Coulthard claims Ferrari have no real chance of beating McLaren teammate Mika Hakkinen to the world title in Japan on Sunday.

Hakkinen leads Michael Schumacher by four points going into the final race in Suzuka. Schumacher needs to win and hope that either teammate Eddie Irvine or another driver stops the Finn from finishing second.

Both teams have meanwhile been working flat out for weeks to try and gain a few tenths of a second in their bid for Formula One glory.

"The really interesting thing about Suzuka on Sunday will be to compare the progress we've made with what Ferrari have managed," Coulthard said. "I'm curious to see who has done better."

"But I think Mika is going to be fine. The world title is every driver's ambition, and you win it by making fewer mistakes than all the others."

"Mika has worked hard, has made few mistakes and has always been top of the standings."

Coulthard's confidence has also been boosted by McLaren's recent tests in Barcelona.

"We did very well," he said. "The new tyres we chose for Suzuka are really incredible. We've made more progress with them alone than with all the other improvements we've made this season."

Dismissing Ferrari's current enthusiasm, he said: "I don't see how Ferrari could be more competitive than they were a month ago. There's no reason to think they will be faster than us."

"I just don't see how they could have improved so much in such a short time and think they can put two men in front of us."

And the Scot insisted: "We've got the best car. We adapted to the new tyres



Finnish Formula One driver Mika Hakkinen from the McLaren waves to reporters as he appears at a news conference at a Tokyo hotel October 26, ahead of the Japanese F1 Grand Prix at the Suzuka circuit which will be held on November 1. In the driver's world championship, Hakkinen's 90 points put him only four points ahead of season-long challenger Michael Schumacher of Germany (Reuters photo)

better right from the very first race and since the last Grand Prix we've been focussing all our technical resources on a car which was already perfect."

"If Ferrari have closed the gap or overtaken us, then we will find out on Friday," he told the Gazzetta dello Sport. "But I would be very surprised."

Troubled Gascoigne eyes early return

LONDON (AFP) — Troubled England midfielder Paul Gascoigne could be in line for a surprise return to the English Premiership this Sunday, barely three weeks after seeking hospital treatment for stress, depression and alcohol-related problems.

The 31-year-old Middlesbrough midfielder took part in a news conference on Monday with manager Bryan Robson in his first public appearance since being voluntarily admitted to the Marchwood Priory Hospital in Hampshire.

Asked when Gascoigne might be fit to play again, Robson said: "I'll gauge him in training this week. He's not in contention for (the League Cup match at home to Everton

on) Wednesday but Sunday's a possibility."

Boro face Nottingham Forest at the Riverside in a live televised match on Sunday.

Gascoigne, once the key creative player in the England team, decided to seek medical advice after a catalogue of personal setbacks including his omission from Glenn Hoddle's World Cup squad, divorce from his wife Sheryl and the death of a close friend.

The player, who many expected to miss at least six weeks of action, told a packed news conference: "I have decided to stop drinking — it is important to keep off the drink."

"I am feeling good, I have kept my fitness up and looking forward to getting back on the park."

"I have missed football. The support from everybody has been tremendous. I have had support from a lot of personal friends."

"It hasn't been too difficult a time. It was in my best interests that I got away and sorted things out."

"It wasn't just the drinking, it was everything. The papers were full of me. I just kept thinking 'why?'"

Robson said: "We felt it was important for Paul to hold a press conference as soon as possible. We have had consultation with the hospital. Everybody came to the decision that it was best for Paul

and his treatment to come back to the club, do his training and go back to hospital a couple of days a week."

"The medical people are delighted with the intense work he put in. They said he was an excellent patient. It is an on-going treatment. He knows he has to work hard at that treatment."

Robson added: "I know Paul has been training at 7 a.m. and 11 p.m. He has been keeping in training while he has been in hospital. His fitness levels are good."

"I will give him time to get back. I want Paul to concentrate on his football and enjoy it."

GOREN BRIDGE

WITH OMAR SHARIF & TAYANAN WISSEH
©1998 TAYANAN WISSEH
©1998 TAYANAN WISSEH

ANSWERS TO WEEKLY BRIDGE QUIZ

Q.1 - Both vulnerable, as South you hold:
410 C94 CAJ4 AAKJ 10872
Partner opens the bidding with one diamond. What do you respond?

A - While your support for partner's suit is minimal (North might have only a three- or four-card suit), your club suit is self-sufficient. Tell partner the happy news by jumping to three clubs, planning to rebid the suit at your next turn unless partner rebids three no trump.

Q.2 - Both vulnerable, as South you hold:
AKQ7 54 1074 CAQJ95 AVOID
Your right-hand opponent opens the bidding with a weak two-bid in hearts. What action do you take?

A - While you surely would like to get into the auction, what would you propose to do that does not run a grave risk of getting your side into serious trouble? Pass, and hope that partner can reopen the bidding.

Q.3 - Both vulnerable, as South you hold:
AAKQ6 7K 10842 Q9 6 A52
The bidding has proceeded:
WEST NORTH EAST SOUTH
Pass 22 Pass Pass
24 Pass Pass 7
What action do you take?

A - To double is out of the question — you don't even have a good double of four spades. It is simply a question of whether you should compete further or pass. Since partner could have bid again but spurned the opportunity, utter the most misused word in bridge — pass.

Q.4 - As South, vulnerable, you hold:
AKQ7 54 1074 CAQJ95 AVOID
Your right-hand opponent opens the bidding with a weak two-bid in hearts. What action do you take?

A - With only 12 points there is no reason why you should think that your weak five-card minor is the stuff for slam, even if partner is maximum. Don't complicate the auction. Jump to three no trump.

Q.5 - As South, vulnerable, you hold:
AK54 5K7 CAJ8 4J 10852
The bidding has proceeded:
WEST NORTH EAST SOUTH
Pass INT Pass 7
What do you bid now?

A - The double fit puts this hand in game territory as long as there is not too much wastage in spades and North has working values. An adequate trump fit is known to exist. The way to test the waters is to bid three clubs now. We do not know anyone who does not play this sequence as a one-trump force.



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Israel says no Jewish settler limits in deal

TEL AVIV (R) — Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said on Monday Israel made no promises to freeze Jewish settlement in the West Bank during a nine-day U.S. peace summit with the Palestinians.

He told Israel's Army Radio he was sticking to a policy of building for Jews in occupied Jerusalem and areas adjacent to existing West Bank Jewish settlements.

"We are building throughout the Land of Israel and also in occupied Jerusalem," Netanyahu said in the face of a more than year-old U.S. appeal for a "time-out" on Jewish settlements and similar actions Washington terms unilateral.

Netanyahu said he expected to win cabinet support for the land-for-peace deal he signed on Friday and later in Israel's parliament (see page 1 story). Under the accord, Israel will give Palestinians 13 per cent more of the West Bank in return for security guarantees.

Jewish settlers, who stake a biblical claim to the Land of Israel that includes the occupied West Bank territory captured in the 1967 Middle East war, have termed the agreement a disaster.

But Netanyahu insisted he remained loyal to the more than 160,000 Jews who live in the settlements scattered among the more than 1.5 million Palestinians of the West Bank.

Israel's housing ministry said 12,000 apartments for Jews had been built over the last two years in areas Israel captured in 1967 — 90 per cent of the units in and around occupied Jerusalem. Of the overall total, 80 per cent had been sold, it said.

The radio interviewer asked Netanyahu if he had promised at the Wye Plantation Middle East summit not to build new settlements, not to confiscate land except for settler bypass roads, and not to demolish 1,800 Palestinian homes.

"There are no agreements. What I have always said pub-

licly — there is nothing secret here — I always said we are building in existing settlements, we build generally adjacent [to settlements] on vacant land," he said.

This, he said, was to accommodate natural growth.

The radio said Netanyahu planned to publish tenders soon for building on Har Homa settlement at the edge of Arab east Jerusalem. Groundbreaking on the settlement in March 1997, on a hill known as Jabal Abu Ghneim, plunged peace talks into a crisis that ended only with Friday's interim peace accord.

"I haven't set a date," Netanyahu said of the report about Har Homa. "I said... homes would be built on Har Homa by the year 2000 and that will happen," he said.

Netanyahu said that under existing Oslo peace deals there were no limits on Israeli construction in Arab east Jerusalem or the rest of the occupied West Bank.



Palestinian women pass right-wing Israelis who gathered near the residence of Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu on Monday to protest his handling of the recently signed peace agreement with the Palestinians and against Netanyahu as prime minister. The right-wing group called 'Women in Green' staged the protest against Netanyahu's agreement to hand over to the Palestinian National Authority 13 per cent of West Bank land in exchange for tougher security measures by the Palestinian side (Reuters photo)

Palestinian opposition warns Wye accord sows seeds of civil war

GAZA CITY (AFP) — Six Palestinian groups opposed to the peace process with Israel warned on Monday that the Wye River land-for-peace accord would sow the seeds of civil war in Palestinian society.

The six parties said the Wye agreement "represents a dangerous plot by Washington and Israel designed to destroy the energies of the Palestinian people and to cultivate civil war."

"It represents a serious and significant retreat in a series of retreats," they added.

Under the Wye River land-for-peace accord, the Palestinian National Authority (PNA) guaranteed to crack down on anti-Israeli activists, in return for an Israeli withdrawal from a further 13 per cent of the West Bank.

The deal calls for the fight against violence to be comprehensive, dealing with "terrorists, the terror support structure and the environment conducive to the support of terror."

"[The agreement] puts the future of the Palestinian cause in the hands of the United States where the main object is to tie the Palestinian side to the interests and security of Israel and its settlers and settlements," the statement said.

In addition, Palestinian compliance with the security clamp-down will be monitored by the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA). In a separate statement issued in Damascus, the DFLP urged Arafat to reject the security conditions and to ban the CIA from the Palestinian territories.

"We call on the Palestinian National

Authority to reject the Israeli security conditions, to prevent the eruption of internal Palestinian wars which are sought after by the Israeli rightwing," it said.

The DFLP also demanded the immediate release of all Palestinian prisoners held in Israeli jails, to stop the crackdown on opponents, and to disarm Jewish settlers in the self-rule areas.

The announcement was signed by a mix of secular and religious opposition groups: the Islamic Resistance Movement (Hamas) and its political arm the Islamic Salvation Party, Islamic Jihad, the Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine (DFLP), the Arab Liberation Front and the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP).

Meanwhile in Gaza, the PNA announced that it will only target the military wings of Palestinian activist movements in any security crackdown, and not legal social and political groups.

International Cooperation Minister Nabil Shaath told reporters in Gaza Monday: "We will establish a clear distinction between political organisations and their military wings."

Shaath, who was involved in the Wye River summit that led to Friday's agreement, said Palestinian President Yasser Arafat would not accept any infringement of human rights of movements acting within the law.

"We will not close any school, clinic, university or mosque which is operating legally," he added.

Lebanon attacks accord, signatories

BEIRUT (AFP) — Lebanese President Elias Hrawi slammed the Wye River accord Monday and those who signed it but reserved his harshest criticism for the Palestinians.

"Save the peace from Israeli intentions and save Arab rights from the hands of some Arab negotiators," he urged the 21st congress of Arab engineers at the UNESCO palace in Beirut.

In an attack on the Palestinian National Authority, Hrawi accused the Palestinians of having "made the Arabs bear the weight of their cause for 50 years," especially Lebanon, where nearly 350,000 Palestinian refugees have lived since the 1948 creation of Israel.

"They destroyed our state, forcing us to work for years to rebuild it," he said in a reference to the 1975-90 civil war, in which the PLO played a major role.

But "they accept a 'statel' in compensation without concern for south Lebanon, invaded by Israel because of them, nor for the Golan, lost by Syria because of its commitment to Arab rights and dignity," he said.

"And now they consider [Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin] Netanyahu as their partner, the same one who refuses to give back the Golan or implement the spirit and text of [U.N. Security Council] Resolution 425," Hrawi said.

The resolution calls for Israel's immediate, unconditional withdrawal from south Lebanon, where it has set up a "buffer zone" to ward off cross-border attacks on its northern territory, originally from the Palestinians.

"In Lebanon, we reject any type of settlement while they don't even raise their little finger against the Israeli settlements built in the heart of their remaining territory," he said of the Palestinians.

Syria, the dominant force in Lebanon, and its smaller neighbour have linked their tracks of the peace process with Israel. Since Syrian-Israeli talks were broken off in February 1996, no progress has been made on the Lebanese track either.

Syria's main demand is for the return of the Golan Heights, which Israel occupied in the 1967 Middle East war.

Syria frees 2 Jordanians

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"Syrian authorities escorted them [from the Jordanian-Syrian border] to Damascus for further questioning," a Jordanian Contractors Association member said in a telephone interview from Beirut.

The source, who asked not to be named, added that Hantash and Abu Hazim were allowed to join their colleagues in Beirut late Sunday.

The Jordan Times yesterday was unable to reach the two engineers personally because they were reportedly participating in one of the four-day conference's activities.

Sources from the Islamic Action Front, in which

Hantash is a member, and the Jordan Engineers Association, however, affirmed earlier Monday that they had reached the two engineers in the Lebanese capital and spoke to them.

Hantash, Abu Hazim and Juneidi are all members of an Amman-based committee fighting against normalisation of ties with Israel. Officials described as "strange" the Syrians' behaviour towards these three specific members in the Jordanian delegation attending the conference.

Syria has long opposed Jordan's 1994 peace treaty with Israel, claiming that the Kingdom broke Arab ranks in the struggle against the Jewish state.

Dubai prepares to launch passenger ferry service to Iraq

DUBAI (R) — Dubai is preparing to launch a passenger ferry service to Iraq, reviving an ancient travel route and giving the beleaguered Arab state its first sea link with the outside world in years.

The chairman of the Dubai Ports Authority, Sultan Ben Sulayem, told a news conference on Monday that Naif Marine Services, a private UAE company, would begin weekly trips from Dubai's Rashid port to Umm Qasr in Iraq early next month.

"The opening of this service is in line with the

United Nations regulations," Ben Sulayem said.

He said that, besides passengers, goods permitted under the United Nations' oil-for-food deal would also be shipped to Iraq.

The U.N. Security Council's Sanctions Committee approved the ferry link last year after an official request by the United Arab Emirates (UAE). Ben Sulayem said.

Iraq has been virtually cut off from the outside world since the United Nations imposed sanc-

tions after the 1991 Gulf war.

The UAE has been in the forefront of calls to bring Iraq back into the Arab fold after its isolation following its 1990 invasion of Kuwait.

Dubai, the UAE's commercial hub, has been preparing the groundwork for trade with Iraq once sanctions are lifted.

With a ban on civilian flights in and out of Iraq, the only route for Iraqis wishing to travel abroad and foreigners interested in visiting the country is a 1,000-kilometre desert

road between Baghdad and Amman.

Mohammad Harmond Al Shamsi of Naif Marine Services said the ferry Jabal Ali 1 would give traders, tourists and officials an opportunity to travel to Iraq in style.

"This sea line is an extension of the ancient service but in a luxurious setting," he said. "We hope to be calling on Iraq by the first week of November," Shamsi said.

Unlike traditional wooden dhows which once were the only vessels carrying goods between the

Gulf states, the ferry would carry up to 550 passengers in comfort.

Ben Sulayem said the ferry, like other vessels, would be subject to scrutiny by international inspectors keeping track of Iraqi trade and deterring smugglers.

The ferry is scheduled to travel to Iraq on Saturdays and return on Mondays. Its captain said the vessel can make the 500-mile journey in about 32 hours but the schedule includes four extra hours to allow for possible delays caused by inspections.

Case of Faisali-Qadissieh match to be decided by discipline committee

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The association official said that the referees submitted a report to the association on Monday but stressed that the report "did not mention violence."

Al Faisali's manager Hussein Abu Assaf said yesterday that his team was "ready for any dialogue to end the deadlock. We have no condition but we are ready to discuss what happened with the concerned parties."

The rapporteur of the association's referees committee, Abdul Latif Abdul Majeed, said that the bearing of the referees by Al Faisali fans was "not acceptable or justifiable."

An expert at the association said that according to international soccer rules, "any team that walks out

from a match is considered a loser."

If these rules are applied, Al Wihdat will steal the lead from Al Faisali. Al Wihdat now top the league standings with 34 points, one point ahead of Al Faisali. Al Wihdat on Monday beat Al Jazireh 3-0.

Al Wihdat are now looking for their 5th consecutive Premier League title. Qasim Abu Shakrah, a spokesman for Al Qadissieh, told the Jordan Times that his club will accept any decision by the association.

"We are not part of the dispute. We played the game and our players did not interfere in what happened. We shall abide by the association's decision," Abu Shakrah told the Jordan Times.

Palestinian, Israeli killed in West Bank

(Continued from page 1)

A Palestinian doctor said Vargas, who was found lying face down in a pool of blood, dressed in running shorts and a T-shirt, had been shot at least twice in the upper body.

His corpse was found on the Israeli-controlled side of the divided city. Hebron, holy

to both Muslims and Jews, was divided under an interim deal done in January 1997.

A spokesman for the Council of Jewish Settlements in Judea and Samaria (the West Bank) and Gaza said it had received word of Vargas's death during a meeting in Jerusalem between the group's leaders

and Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu.

"(The settler leadership) brought the matter to the prime minister's attention and he said he viewed it with great gravity and would take all the necessary measures to prevent such incidents," the spokesman said in a statement.

Southern Bell Corp. quits race to hold 40% equity in JTC

(Continued from page 1)

At the time, investment bankers and some officials said such terms could be discouraging to both firms as they prepare their final price bids.

Southern Bell's move is likely to fuel an already fiery political debate between the government, pushing for a strategic partner, on the one hand and Ali Shukri, the telecommunications company's new chairman, opposed to such a partnership. A majority of lawmakers, fearing the government is relin-

quishing state assets to foreigners, also reject a strategic partner.

The government is pushing for the strategic partnership on the grounds that it would allow a transfer of modern technology along with a business plan that would move it smoothly into the post 2002 era when its monopoly ends.

On Friday, the government successfully concluded a prize deal to sell a 33 per cent equity stake in the blue-chip Jordan Cement Factories Company, the other jewel in its privatisation programme, to French cement giant

Lafarge.

The government, which owns 49.3 per cent of the country's sole cement producer, initiated an agreement with Lafarge to sell 20 million of its shares to the French firm at JD3.6 a share.

The government must understand that there is a window of opportunity," said an international investment banker. "If you wait too long, it may close and potential investors will pack their bags and head for other markets," he said.

Experts confirm nerve gas finding

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The tests have been a source of controversy since June, when a U.S. army laboratory at Aberdeen, Maryland, said it found traces of VX in 11 of the 46 swipes it analysed in May.

Iraq accused the United States of faking the results and insisted French and Swiss laboratories duplicate them.

Samples from different areas of a warhead dump in Iraq were then given to Swiss and French government laboratories in July. The report said tests from Switzerland proved negative as did a second round of U.S. tests from other samples.

France, according to the report, found a "degradation product" of a nerve agent in one sample, which could be VX, or other nerve agents called sarin and soman.

But the report also said tests from French and Swiss laboratories and a second round of American tests from samples taken in June and July all found chemicals associated with a decontamination com-

pound.

Some arms experts suggested that this substance was normal while others believed an attempt had been made at some point to remove traces of any nerve gas.

The "presence of certain non-chemical weapons related compounds" in the Swiss, French and second American samples "has no obvious explanation," the report said.

VX, a colourless liquid that turns into gas, needs a stabiliser to keep it from degrading. Iraqi officials say they were not able to stabilise VX, which prevents the transmission of nerve signals, causing loss of muscle control, respiratory paralysis and death.

The experts, called together by the U.N. Special Commission (UNSCOM), in charge of dismantling Iraq's weapons of mass destruction, met at U.N. headquarters on Thursday and Friday.

"During the meeting, all analytical data provided by the three laboratories were again considered as conclusive and valid," the report said.

Annual migration campaign of livestock in Madrid

MADRID (R) — The clocks in Spain appeared to have been turned back hundreds of years as drivers in Madrid found themselves tied up not by a traffic jam but by a flock of sheep wandering through the streets of the capital. Shepherds led some 2,000 noisy sheep with clanking bells through the heart of Madrid in a move to draw attention to a campaign to revive the annual migration of livestock along Spain's ancient cattle paths, some of which cross the capital's main thoroughfares. Sponsored by an European environmental group, shepherds are trying to reclaim 10 former migration paths or "canadas" by the year 2001 for recreational use.

Oasis star Gallagher 'bored' of drugs

LONDON (AFP) — Oasis guitarist and songwriter Noel Gallagher says he is "bored" with drugs now, after adamantly supporting the use of illegal substances since his rise to stardom. "I've calmed down now, I've kicked it on the head," the star of the British pop band told the New Musical Express magazine in its Monday edition. "It got too much and it's too boring for me now," he said, adding: "But last year and the year before it was mental." The hugely successful group has obviously decided to take things easy now, at the risk of alienating some of their fans.

Oldies strike gold in U.K. pop charts

LONDON (R) — The oldies of the pop world have struck gold by storming into the top of Britain's charts in an unprecedented assault on Nineties music. American singer Cher, 52, has gone straight to the number one slot with her new single "Believe" released 33 years after she and Sonny Bono topped the U.K. charts with "I got you babe." British singer George Michael, Irish supergroup U2, and reformed 1980s band Culture Club took the next three slots with new releases. It was the first time in British music history that the top five in the singles charts consisted entirely of new releases.

Former aircraft carrier to become pleasure palace

BEIJING (AFP) — A cold war era aircraft carrier that fell victim to cost cutting after the fall of Soviet Union has been sold to a Chinese amusement park for \$43.6 million, reports said Monday. The aircraft carrier Minsk, part of the former Soviet Union's Black Sea naval fleet, is docked in Shantou port in the southern Chinese city of Dongguan, the Liaoshe Evening News reported. The 40,000-tonne craft, which now sits high in the water as its weaponry and motor have been removed, is undergoing a major refit and will be transformed into a pleasure palace at Shenzhen Water World, near to Hong Kong.

Dane takes dead father on last motorcycle ride

COPENHAGEN (R) — A Danish man bade his dead father farewell by taking his corpse for a motorcycle ride at the weekend, stopping at a bar for beer and a cigar. Flemming Pedersen, 37, asked the staff at the hospital where his 86-year-old father died if he could be left alone with him for a while, the tabloid BT reported on Monday. Pedersen dressed the rigid corpse in leather gear, boots, a helmet and dark sunglasses and walked it out of the hospital. Then he strapped the body to the seat of his Harley Davidson with elastic straps and drove around metropolitan Copenhagen for three hours, visiting his father's favourite spots.

Iraq on V

BAGHDAD rejected on Tuesday a U.N. Security Council report that Baghdad was not complying with U.N. demands to disarm. Baghdad said it was playing a game to prolong the war. "Iraq has no intention of giving up its weapons," it said. "The U.N. Security Council has no right to interfere in Iraq's internal affairs." The report, issued by the U.N. on Tuesday, said Baghdad had refused to allow U.N. inspectors to enter the country.